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Boston University

Graduate School

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Thesis

THE SOURCES OF RICHARD THE SECOND

by

Robert T. Marsh

(A.B., Clark University, 1942)

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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Introduction

The end and aim of this paper is to look into the sources and origins of Shakespeare's history plays, to take one play--Richard II--individually as an example of Shakespeare's use of his sources, and to give a composite picture of the garden from which this play grew.

Shakespeare was gifted with a genius of a type yet to be equaled; however, he was not always original, nor did he rely upon inspiration from the gods to help him. Shakespeare was a human being, much as we like to enthrone him as a deity; his little graveyard at Stratford is proof of that. Yet he was a man who was able to take the tools that were available to him--the form of the drama, the language of his time, and the verse forms--and mould his immortal plays with them.

In looking upon the composite picture of what was available to Shakespeare for background material in the writing of his history plays, we naturally think of the Chronicle Histories--Holinshed, Hall, and Froissart--as being the chief quarry for his facts and ideas. However, as I shall attempt to illustrate, the man Shakespeare was influenced by a number of things.

The Chronicle Play did not begin in 1588 as one might be led to believe from the emphasis historians have put on the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The Chronicle Play had its roots deeply set in the early English drama; it had been popularized through the people's interest in the question of the succession;

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it was shadowed by the contemplation upon the falls of princes brought about by this interest in the Queen's successor; and it had gone through a process of evolution from the morality-historical, to the legendary-historical, to the patriotic-historical, and finally, after an offshoot to pseudo-historical, had reached its peak in the tragical-historical play where Shakespeare picked it up.

The parts of Shakespeare's scene begin to fit together as one surveys the origins of the chronicle play: here each part of the composite picture has been treated as a full chapter, and an attempt has been made to place each chapter in its logical position within the whole.

Perhaps too much emphasis has been put on the influence of Christopher Marlowe on Shakespeare in this paper. However, it is not my purpose to paint Shakespeare as a plagiarist; his works are too great and have stood the test of time too long for any modern fumbling scholar to make rash judgments about them.

For the sake of unity I have tried to keep my discussion centered about the type of play called history play in the First Folio of 1623.

To Shakespeare's time the Chronicle Play was to become so popular as to overshadow the other forms of the drama at times.

(1) Felix S. Schelling, The English Chronicle Play, New York, 1932, p. 1.

(2) William Shakespeare, The Tragedy of Richard the Second, II, 1, 40 ff..

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Chapter One

The Early English Chronicle Plays

"The English Chronicle Play began with the tide of patriotism which united all England to repel the threatened invasion of Philip of Spain."¹.

In the last two decades of the Sixteenth Century more people than ever before were interested in the political situation in England. Ruled by a Virgin Queen who had named no successor, England was under attack by the most powerful fleet in the world. In 1588, the year of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, the most popular vehicles of thought were the Chronicle Plays, Chronicle Histories, and Historical Poems. The famous lines of the dying John of Gaunt in Richard II are an example of the fervid nationalism of the time:

"This royal throne of kings, this scept' red isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this
England....." ².

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"This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd state,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by nature for herself,
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of man, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
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Schelling calls it "the most vigorous offshoot of a body of literature whose essence was the assertion of a national consciousness and a recalling of the scenes of the past."¹

With the revival of interest in the ancients that accompanied the Renaissance in England came the system of dividing plays into five acts. The legendary history play Gorboduc had this division. The first of the factual chronicle plays, The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, did not. At this time the terms "Tragoedia" and "Comedia" came into use.²

Gorboduc was called a tragedy by its authors, Sackville and Norton; the first play of Shakespeare's best historical tetralogy was called The Tragedy of King Richard the Second. The Senecan form of play, imitated by the English, had little or no action on the stage. The chorus usually concluded the first four acts, and an epilogue followed the fifth act.³

"The horrors of the tragedy were communicated to the audience in long, stilted, or bombastic speeches, often by a messenger."⁴

Although the form for the Chronicle Plays had come from the Continent, the content was from the first uniquely English. The old sacred drama had been devoid of nationalism. The church processions and ritual had been the same on the Conti-

(1) Schelling, op. cit., p. 37.

(2) E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage, Volume II, London, 1903. P. 103.

(3) Harry C. Schweikert, Early English Plays, New York, 1928. PP. 40-43

(4) Ibid., p. 43.

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- (3) Harry G. Schwabert, Early English Plays, New York, 1928, pp. 40-43.
- (4) Ibid., p. 43.

ment as in England. When the Mystery Plays became secularized, the human aspect as distinct from the religious aspect had been broadened. The coming of the vernacular had fostered nationalism, each country having its own language.¹ The Chronicle Plays had their source not only in the Miracle Plays, but also in the medieval balladry and in the folklore where love of action and nationality were preserved.² The Oxfordshire St. George and the Dragon, with its King Alfred, King William, and Old King Cole, had descended from the old sacred drama, and had added legendary and historical personages. Performed by "mummers" wearing masks, this play was used at religious festivities having to do with Whitsunday and Christmas.³ Robin Hood is an example of the play that came from popular folk-lore. It could be called national in that Robin was the ideal type of free Englishman.⁴ Neither of these plays was of the Renaissance spirit, but showed "the development of the secular and comic elements" which had come about with the "laicization of the drama."⁵

As the laity took over the drama such characters as Herod, the Magdalen, and the devil were developed.⁶ The bombast of Herod was later seen in the long, ranting speeches of Marlowe's men of action such as Tamburlaine. The gaudy luxury and ro-

(1) Chambers, op. cit., p. 88.

(2) Schelling, op. cit., p. 3.

(3) John Quincy Adams, Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas, Cambridge, 1924. P. 353.

(4) Schelling, op. cit., p. 6.

(5) Chambers, op. cit., p. 175 ff.

(6) Ibid.,

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- (1) Chambers, op. cit., p. 58.
- (2) Schelling, op. cit., p. 5.
- (3) John Goss, Chapel Plays of the Middle Ages, Cambridge, 1904, p. 355.
- (4) Schelling, op. cit., p. 6.
- (5) Chambers, op. cit., p. 175 ff.
- (6) Ibid.

mance of the Magdalen saw development in the boudoir scenes of such plays as Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. The devil scenes grew into the comedy scenes of Elizabethan drama. Farnham draws a parallel between the death of Christ and the fall of princes. He describes the Christ of the early religious drama as "an emaciated, nerve-wracked, and thorn-crowned Christ, with the eyes closed, and the head fallen limply in death."¹ "The highly conscious forms of meditation upon the wounds of Jesus, upon his agony, and upon his death",² as seen in the religious drama, gave way to interest in the fall of princes and kings.

A play of great importance in leading up to the real Chronicle Plays is Bishop Bale's King Johan. This play is a mixture of the morality and the history play.³ It has as its main interest religion rather than politics.⁴ There is no study of the cause and effect of history, no political reflection. The play is Protestant propaganda with allegorical characters turning into historical ones. John is a sort of English Everyman.⁵ The King is the only person who is historical all the way through. The rest are abstractions; for example, the Pope is Usurped Power.⁶ Bale brings evil, "generously given a papistical color," its well-deserved punish-

(1) Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy, Berkeley, California, 1936. P. 174.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Schweikert, op. cit., p. 43.

(4) Schelling, op. cit., p. 15.

(5) E. M. W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays, New York, 1946. P. 93.

(6) Farnham, op. cit., p. 249.

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(1) *William Farham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy*, Berkeley, California, 1936, p. 174.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Schweikert, op. cit.*, p. 45.

(4) *Schweikert, op. cit.*, p. 15.

(5) *W. W. Tillyer, Shakespeare's History Plays*, New York, 1906, p. 93.

(6) *Farham, op. cit.*, p. 240.

ment.¹ The hero, King Johan, "fights a losing action and is overwhelmed by evil forces from abroad and by evil forces at home."² The king is poisoned by a Catholic monk, and "Bale is not content until he has condemned Sediton, the villain of the piece, to be hanged and to have his head impaled upon London Bridge."³

Historical drama had two main paths of development in England. On the one side were the legendary plays, of which Gorboduc was the first. On the other side were the factual chronicle plays, of which The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth is the first example. The development of the former led to Shakespeare's King Lear; whereas the latter went in the direction of such plays as Richard the Second. Brander Matthews and A.H. Thorndike did not allow for this separation. They thought that "Richard II and Lear, instead of being segregated as two distinct forms of which the earlier was dispossessed by the latter, may both be called history plays in that both conceive drama historically."⁴

"It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the position which Gorboduc holds."⁵ It is the first English play to be a conscious imitation of the Senecan type. Sackville and Norton, students at the Inner Temple, used the blank

(1) Farnham, op. cit., p. 225.

(2) Ibid., p. 248.

(3) Ibid., p. 226.

(4) Brander Matthews and Ashley H. Thorndike, Shakespeare Studies, Columbia University, 1916. P. 303

(5) Schelling, op. cit., p. 18.

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- (2) Idem, p. 248.
- (3) Idem, p. 296.
- (4) Brenner Matthews and Arthur R. Thornhike, Shakespeare Studies, Columbia University, 1916, p. 303.
- (5) Boehlin, op. cit., p. 18.

verse of Surrey in writing it. They used as their source the chronicle of Geoffrey of Monmouth, a not too reliable historian. Its theme is selected from historical legend. The main plot is political. Gorboduc, the King of Britain, has decided to divide his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex, while he is living.¹ The tragedy arises from this violation of custom. The theme of Gorboduc is that "political order is a part of a larger order, natural and divine."² When that order is tampered with, tragedy ensues. "Gorboduc had made mistakes, but that was no justification for the people, fickle and irresponsible, to rise and kill him."³

With a virgin queen at England's helm this play was timely. It was "seemingly written as a strong argument for settlement of succession."⁴ Sackville and Norton "Moved within the political circle that brought much pressure to bear on the Queen, and the play appears to reflect the tensi-ty of that agitation."⁵ "There is every indication that they honestly desired to give an object lesson to Queen Elizabeth, showing the evils which might ensue in the realm of England if succession to her throne should be left unsettled."⁶ It follows that the lesson taught in Gorboduc is that a ruler's

(1) Adams, op. cit., pp. 505-535.

(2) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 95.

(3) Ibid., p. 97.

(4) Gertrude C. Reese, The Question of the Succession in Elizabethan Drama, University of Texas, 1942. P. 62.

(5) Ibid.

(6) Farnham, op. cit., p. 352.

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- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Barnham, op. cit., p. 352.

misfortunes can be avoided by proper action.¹ In this respect Gorboduc is like the moral plays, "For one thing, since it is the tragedy of a commonwealth of a king, it enforces a moral concerning the decay of kingdoms."²

Schweikert calls Gorboduc the first English Chronicle Play.³ Tillyard is closer. He says, "It is not too easy to put a label on Gorboduc."⁴ Regardless this play is important. It is the first to have a classical regularity of construction. It has the spirit of The Mirror for Magistrates, the series of political poems on the fall of great men. Schelling says that Gorboduc is written with artistic purpose, and is not didactic.⁵ Tillyard calls it "a piece of solemn contemporary didacticism."⁶ I am inclined to agree with the latter, for the supposed basic truth of Gorboduc--that the king rules by divine right, and when that right is usurped chaos ensues--is to be found in many of the later Chronicle Plays.

The play Gorboduc, then, is the first important example of the legendary branch of the Chronicle Play. Let us now look at the other branch, from which our play The Tragedy of Richard the Second is derived, and examine The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth as a good example of the factual type of Chronicle Play.

(1) Farnham, op. cit., p. 353.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Schweikert, op. cit., p. 44.

(4) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 93.

(5) Schelling, op. cit., p. 18.

(6) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 93.

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- (1) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 255.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Schweikert, op. cit., p. 44.
- (4) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 93.
- (5) Schelling, op. cit., p. 18.
- (6) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 93.

"The Chronicle History plays proper date from 1588, or earlier, when The Famous Victories of Henry V was played."¹. This play is of poor construction and is a contrast to the Senecan Gorboduc. Yet it is important as it introduced Prince Hal and his disreputable companions to Shakespeare². and was the source for a part of each of the plays in Shakespeare's tetralogy of Richard II, Henry IV parts One and Two, and Henry V.

The Famous Victories of Henry V was not divided into acts and scenes as was Gorboduc. It was written in verse and prose³. and had "primitive principles of structure."⁴. The authorship of The Famous Victories is unknown. It was drawn from "British history, or what was accepted as history in the chronicles."⁵.

The Famous Victories begins as Prince Hal, Ned, and Tom are counting up the amount they have stolen from the King's receivers. This scene is reminiscent of the Prince, Poins, and Falstaff on the highway near Gadshill in Henry IV, Part I.⁶ Sir John Oldcastle enters to tell them that the town of Detford is up in arms against their robber companion.⁷ He

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- (1) Schweikert, op. cit., p. 47.
 (2) Raymond M. Alden, A Shakespeare Handbook, New York, 1935. p. 120.
 (3) Schweikert, op. cit., p. 47.
 (4) Farnham, op. cit., p. 379.
 (5) Ibid.
 (6) Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I, II, 11.
 (7) The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, l. 25 ff..

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- (2) Raymond V. Allen, A Shakespeare Bibliography, New York, 1935, p. 120.
- (3) Schweikert, op. cit., p. 47.
- (4) Farnham, op. cit., p. 279.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I, II, III.
- (7) The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, I, 25 ff..

is the original Falstaff, but is not the developed character of Shakespeare's plays. Indeed he does not enter into the comic scenes at all. At one time Derrick and John Cobbler mimic the Judge and the Prince much like the Prince and Falstaff mimicked the King in Henry IV,¹ but Oldcastle does not appear.² Neither do we have the conspiracy of Northumberland, Mortimer, and Hotspur, or the soldiers headed by Fluellen of Henry V.³

The play has the patriotism and pride in England seen in later chronicle plays, but it differs from Shakespeare's histories in that it has little thought about the cause and effect of historical events.⁴ It does have the basic facts of the young Prince and his miraculous change after coming to the throne of England. It does show Henry V as "a bluff hearty man and good mixer of pre-eminence among English kings."⁵

At times we see almost identical passages in this play and in those of Shakespeare's tetralogy. In The Famous Victories after the Prince has been sent to prison the King says:

"Ah, Harry! Harry! now thrice accursed
Harry, that hath gotten a sonne with
Greefe will end his father's days!" 6.

- (1) Henry IV, Part I, II, iv.
- (2) The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, l. 170 ff..
- (3) Schelling, op. cit., p. 41.
- (4) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 105.
- (5) Ibid., p. 305.
- (6) The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, l. 363 ff..

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"Ah, Harry! Harry! how thrice occurred Harry, that hath gotten a sonna with Grosse will and his father's days!"⁹

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| (1) | Henry IV, Part I, II, iv. |
| (2) | The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, I, 170 ff. |
| (3) | Schelling, op. cit., p. 41. |
| (4) | Trilby, op. cit., p. 192. |
| (5) | Ibid., p. 305. |
| (6) | The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, I, 363 ff. |

In Richard II, for a brief moment, we have notice taken of the dissolute Prince:

"Can no man tell me of my unthrifty son?
'Tis full three months since I did see him last.
If any plague hang o'er us, 'tis he."¹

With this play (1588) we are at the point where Shakespeare and his contemporaries began. The Chronicle History had evolved from the Mystery Plays, the folk-plays, and balladry of the Middle Ages into the semi-religious, semi-historical King Johan. It had then taken two branches: the first legendary historical play, Gorboduc, and the first factual chronicle play, The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth.

(1) The Tragedy of King Richard II, V, iii, 1 ff... and simply

(1) W. D. Howells, Marlowe's Richard II, London, 1914, p. 1.

(2) ibid.

(3) E. G. Salmon and E. L. Maitland, English and Scottish Popular Ballads, Boston, 1914, p. 1.

(4) ibid.

In Richard II, for a brief moment, we have noticed taken at

the disolute Prince:

"Can no man tell me of my unchastity's end?
'tis full three months since I did see him last.
If any pleasure hang o'er me, 'tis he."

With this play (1588) we are at the point where Shakes-

peare and his contemporaries began. The Chronicle History

had evolved from the Mystery Plays, the Cook-plays, and

beliefs of the Middle Ages into the semi-religious, semi-

historical King Lear. It had then branched into two branches: the

first legendary historical play, Coriolanus, and the first

actual historical play, The Famous Victories of Henry the

Fifth.

Chapter Two

The Falls of Princes

To the great mass of English people who could not read, the ballad was the form by which English history had been passed on from generation to generation. The uneducated were "not less patriotic than their superiors, but their knowledge of history was of necessity derived mainly from tradition, from what of historic truth had been able to survive in ballad and legend."¹ It was not uncommon for one's nurse to be able "to repeat the history of England, from the conquest down to the time of Charles I, in ballads."²

The English popular ballad was "a song that tells a story," or to put it another way it was "a story told in song."³ The ballads had no authors; for the teller of the story is as much the author as the unknown person who first put it into shape. The ballads, often called folk-poetry, sprung up after an event or the rumor of an event, their stories existing for their own sake. As they were not written down, the ballads changed from time to time. Many would be forgotten if it weren't for such collections as that of Francis James Child edited by Sargent and Kittredge.⁴

The ballads that have come down to us cover legendary as well as actual history. One of the former is called simply

(1) W. D. Briggs, Marlowe's Edward II, London, 1914. P. 1.

(2) Ibid...

(3) H. C. Sargent and G. L. Kittredge, English and Scottish Popular Ballads, Boston, 1904. P. 1.

(4) Ibid...

King Arthur and King Cornwall. The event it celebrates is the argument between Cornwall and Arthur when King Cornwall insulted Arthur and had his head cut off by the latter's mighty sword.¹ Another tells the story of King John and the Bishop. King John is described as a bad king, who is jealous of the Bishop's wealth. He gives the Bishop three questions to answer, and says that the Bishop must die if he can't answer them. The Bishop's brother, a shepherd, borrows his cloak and appears before the king to answer the questions. Here we have the old trick of mistaken identity. The king gets the answers he wants and writes out a pardon for the Bishop.²

The ballad called King Henry the Fifth's Conquest of France treats the incident of the tennis-balls which is found in both The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth and in Shakespeare's Henry V. In this ballad King Henry sent his page to France to claim the customary tribute. The page comes back with the tennis balls and a saucy reply from the French monarch. King Henry then gathers his men and takes revenge on the French, killing ten thousand Frenchmen:³

"We killd ten thousand of the French,
And the rest of them they ran away."

The Rose of England had as its subject the winning of the crown from Richard III by Henry VII. A good part of it is allegori-

(1) Sargent and Kittredge, op. cit., p. 49.

(2) Ibid., p. 78.

(3) Ibid., p. 402.

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the argument between Cornwall and Arthur when King Cornwall
threw Arthur and then his head cut off by the latter's mighty
sword. Another tale is a story of King John and the Bishop.
King John is described as a bad king, who is jealous of the
Bishop's wealth. He gives the Bishop three questions to answer,
and says that the Bishop must die if he can't answer them.
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with the tennis balls and a saucy reply from the French monarch.
King Henry then gathers his men and takes revenge on the French.
Killing ten thousand Frenchmen:

"He killed ten thousand of the French,
And the rest of them lay in a sty."

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from Richard III by Henry VII. A good part of it is allegori-

- (1) Sargent and Kitteredge, op. cit., p. 40.
- (2) Ibid., p. 78.
- (3) Ibid., p. 102.

cal, describing Henry as the seed of the red rose of Lancaster which grew back to replace the tree uprooted by the white boar, Richard III. Of Richard it says:

"Hee tooke the branches of this rose away,
And all in sunder did them teare,
And he buryed them under a clodd of clay,
Swore they should never bloom nor beare."¹

It then goes on to tell how Richmond crossed the channel and put the white boar's troops to flight:

"But now is the ffeirce ffeeld ffoughten and
ended,
And the white bore there byeth slaine."

The imagery here resembles that of Richard II, with its garden scene; but this is probably coincidence as one cannot help but think of the War of the Roses in terms of an allegory.

The ballad goes on with:

"But now this garden fflourishes ffreshly and gay
With ffregrant fflowers comely of hew,
And gardners itt doth maintaine;
I hope they will proue just and true.

"Our king, he is the rose soe redd,
That now does fflourish ffresh and gay:
Confound his foes, Lord, we beseech,
And loue His Grace both night and day."

"The spirit of these metrical effusions was in an exaggerated degree the spirit of the chronicles. They at once stimulated the people's curiosity, appealed to their patriotism and insular pride, and reinforced the appeal by the celebration of particular deeds and exploits."²

(1) Sargent and Kittredge, op. cit., p. 405 ff..

(2) Briggs, op. cit., p. li.

Some of the ballads celebrated the victories of the English over their foes and differ from the chronicles only in enlarging the facts. Flodden Field¹ covers the battle between the Scotch and Henry VIII's troops in 1513:

"At Flodden Field the Scots came in,
Which made our English men faine;
At Bramstone Greene this battaile was seene,
There was King Jamie slaine.

Then presently the Scots did flie,
Their cannons they left behind;
Their ensignes gay were won all away,
Oure soldiers did beate them blinde.

To tell you plaine, twelve thousand were slaine
That to the field did stand,
And many prisoners tooke that day,
The best in all Scotland."

The historical ballads were no doubt a source for the Englishman to get his knowledge of past events. In many cases the chroniclers leaned toward them in filling in a gap. Kittredge writes, "Much ballad material is doubtless preserved in the chronicles, but the ballads themselves are not there."²

A subject of great interest to Englishmen was the moral pointed by the falls of princes. It was to be found not only in the balladry but also in the chronicle histories, chronicle poems, and chronicle plays. "History provided innumerable examples of men who fell from prosperity, and especially of men who fell because of a single passion or error."³ Their falls gave

(1) Sargent and Kittredge, op. cit., p. 412.

(2) Ibid., Introduction, p. xiv.

(3) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 56.

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"At Richard Field the Scotch came in,
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At Brumfistone Greene this battell was scene,
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Then presently the Scotch did flee,
Their cannons they left behind;
Their swiftness they were won all away,
Our soldiers did beat them blind."

To tell you plain, twelve thousand were slain
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(1) Sargent and Kitteredge, op. cit., p. 412.
(2) Ibid., Introduction, p. xiv.
(3) Timothy, op. cit., p. 56.

the material for moral lessons to the people and to their rulers. The history plays thrived on the subject of "the eternal slipperiness of political power."¹ It was an old theme very popular in the Christian Middle Ages. This theme was used by the playwrights of Elizabethan England until, as Wells dramatically puts it, "the walls of the theaters resounded with the falls of princes."²

For centuries the poets had treated the subject of the falls of princes. As a source for Shakespeare's knowledge of history they cannot be overlooked. The Chronicle Histories contained the greater part of the material from which Shakespeare got his conception of history; however, it is unlikely that he was not acquainted with the poets of his time who had written on the subject of history.³

The medieval anticipations of such works as The Mirror for Magistrates were seen in Boccaccio's De Casibus Virorum Illustrium and in Chaucer's Monk's Tale.⁴ The De Casibus, although it is not so well known as the Decameron, was more popular in Italy in Boccaccio's time.⁵ It was "a series of prose stories in a vision framework."⁶ It portrayed the misfortunes of various men and women. One tale, for example, was on the fall of a princess from grandeur and high rank to ad-

(1) Henry W. Wells, Elizabethan and Jacobean Playwrights, New York, 1939. P. 69.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 71.

(4) Ibid., p. 28.

(5) Farnham, op. cit., p. 77.

(6) Ibid., p. 73.

versity. The Monk's Tale in the Canterbury Tales of Chaucer concerned the fall of such men as Adam, Sampson, Hercules, Nero, and Julius Caesar.¹ Both of these Fourteenth Century exempla had the medieval theme that "the falls of great ones are best proofs of the argument that no man has control over his mortal fate," and that we should "trust not at all in this world, but in the next world."²

The Monk says in his Prologue that he will tell

"Of him that stood in greet prosperitee
And is y-fallen out of heigh degree
Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly."³

Chaucer, in his Troilus and Criseyde, tells how "the son of a king adventured upward from woe to joy, and then from joy to woe."⁴ Here was the fall of a proud and confident prince who could not change the way of the world. Chaucer introduced Book I as follows:

"The double sorwe of Troilus to Tellen,
That was the king Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovinge, how his adventures fellen
Fro wo to wele, and after out of joye,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye."⁵

In the Fifteenth Century Lydgate's Fall of Princes was among the best sellers. It may have been "crude moral didacti-

(1) Walter W. Skeat, The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, New York, 1894. Pp. 530-541.

(2) Farnham, op. cit., p. 79.

(3) Skeat, op. cit., p. 531, The Canterbury Tales, l. 3165-3167.

(4) Farnham, op. cit., p. 141

(5) Skeat, op. cit., p. 206, Troilus and Criseyde, l. 1-5.

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"Of him that stood in greet prosperitee
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Late miserable, and endeth wretchedly."³

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In lovinge, how his aventure fell
To woe to wele, and after out of joye
My purpose is, er that I passe the 3e."⁵

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- (1) Walter W. Skeat, *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, New York, 1894, pp. 230-241.
- (2) *Parman*, op. cit., p. 72.
- (3) Skeat, op. cit., p. 231, *The Canterbury Tales*, l. 3162-3167.
- (4) *Parman*, op. cit., p. 141.
- (5) Skeat, op. cit., p. 206, *Troilus and Criseyde*, l. 1-5.

cism" as Farnham calls it,¹ but it was popular enough even in the late Sixteenth Century to have the printer of the Mirror for Magistrates introduce the latter as a sequel to the Fall of Princes.² There was little subtlety in the "fanatic morality"³ of the Fall of Princes. Lechery and sensuality abounded. Lydgate listed all the sins of which he found men guilty. In describing the death of Julian, a monk who had strayed from the path, he tells how "his body was flayed, and his skin was tanned with greatest care at the order of the Persian King Sapor, and nailed on Sapor's palace gate."⁴ He also gives his version of the death of Mohammed. This worthy prophet of Allah was drunk, fell into a mud puddle, and there was devoured by swine.⁵

Shakespeare was probably acquainted with The Mirror for Magistrates. This collection of tales, written by a group of poets, was also concerned with the falls of great men. "Its main intention was not to swell an already long list of tragical narratives, but to point a very solemn contemporary moral, namely to educate the prince or magistrate by a series of exemplary stories that would teach him to shun vice."⁶ Thomas Marsh first published the Mirror for Magistrates in 1559.⁷ This was one year after Queen Elizabeth had ascended the throne.

(1) Farnham, op. cit., p. 160.

(2) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 71.

(3) Farnham, op. cit., p. 164.

(4) Ibid.,

(5) Ibid..

(6) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 72.

(7) Farnham, op. cit., p. 278.

The nineteen legends¹ of The Mirror for Magistrates covered the historical period from Richard II to Edward IV.² Later additions took it back into legendary British history and took it forward as far as the reign of Henry VIII.

The stories of The Mirror for Magistrates are written as a series of "imaginary monologues by the ghosts of certain eminent British statesmen who came to unfortunate ends. They are pictured as speaking to a group of men (namely the actual authors of the stories) of whom William Baldwin is the leader."³ One of the stories is on Mowbray, "who was banished by Richard II and died miserably in exile."⁴ Another is on Richard II himself, who "ruled all by lust and made little of justice, right, or law." The moral appended to his tale was: "Princes, take warning from what happens to him; curb your vices and do not trust flatterers."⁵

The Mirror for Magistrates gives a reason for the fall of Richard II, but it does not soften the fact that Henry IV (Bolingbroke) was a usurper and that he had committed a sin in rebelling against Richard.⁶ It emphasizes the fact that obedience to the king is the best policy and that rebellion leads to civil war and discord.⁷

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- (1) Schelling, op. cit., p. 35.
 - (2) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 72.
 - (3) Ibid.
 - (4) Farnham, op. cit., p. 283.
 - (5) Ibid., p. 284
 - (6) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 88.
 - (7) Ibid., p. 90.

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- (1) Schelling, op. cit., p. 32.
- (2) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 72.
- (3) Ibid.
- (4) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 283.
- (5) Ibid., p. 284.
- (6) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 88.
- (7) Ibid., p. 90.

In its discussion of Richard II's reign The Mirror for Magistrates makes "fortune to surrender the mystery of her ways and to work according to laws which men may analyze and understand. Thomas of Woodstock, the Duke of Gloucester and Uncle of King Richard II, was unlawfully murdered. Fortune raised him (Richard) and fortune lowered him at her will. She put him upon a scaffold which she made ever higher, and more flimsy, until he was like one on a stage attending a play, unconscious of his frail support until the timber collapsed."¹.

Schelling does not see the Mirror for Magistrates as an immediate source for any of the many historical plays based on English history. He states that "the influence of such a work in choice of subject and, at times, in manner of treatment cannot but have been exceedingly great."².

(1) Farnham, op. cit., p. 302.

(2) Schelling, op. cit., p. 36.

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- (1) Farrham, op. cit., p. 302.
(2) Schelling, op. cit., p. 30.

Chapter Three

The Political Picture

The falls of princes had provided grist for the mills of English authors for centuries before Shakespeare, and of all subjects the subject of King Richard the Second's fall was one of greatest interest to the Elizabethans. John Palmer writes, "For over two centuries he (Richard the Second) had stood to poets and historians for a supreme example of the tragical fall of princes, which appealed so strongly to the imagination and conscience of the post-medieval world. To the legitimists he was a martyr and his enforced abdication a sacrilege. To the Lancastrians his removal was a necessary act of providence."¹.

How much Shakespeare knew about the War of Roses from books and how much he knew from being a good listener is hard to tell. As a youth he had lived near the road that Bolingbroke took in his triumphant march from Ravenspurgh to London. He probably had heard many times from villagers whose ancestors had joined in the popular uprising how Bolingbroke made

" . . . his courtship to the common people,"².

and

" . . . did seem to dive into their hearts
With humble and familiar courtesy."³.

Shakespeare certainly seems well versed in Tudor propaganda in

(1) John Palmer, The Political Characters of Shakespeare, 1945. P. 120.

(2) Richard II, I, iv, 24.

(3) Ibid., I, iv, 25, 26.

his Henry VI plays.

When in London, Shakespeare had courted the patronage of the young Earl of Southhampton. The latter was an intimate friend of the Earl of Essex, who had strong claim to the throne of England.¹ The fall of a Queen might have meant the throne for Essex and high position for Southhampton. A play such as Richard II, with its deposition scene, might even figure in this fall. "To Shakespeare's audience its political significance was immediate and tremendous," Palmer writes of Richard II.²

The Elizabethan mind was not as well acquainted with the sciences as it was with the Fine Arts; for to the Englishmen of Shakespeare's time the universe consisted of Heaven above, Hell below, and in the middle the firmament stood "like a jewel on the floor of Heaven."³ Outside of this set stage of Earth, Heaven, and Hell all was chaos. Earth was the center of the universe; and within its center stood man, the masterpiece. A fear of chaos constantly harassed the Elizabethan. There was a fear in the hearts of all Englishmen that the balance of things--that harmony brought about by the ordered hierarchy of degrees, corresponding to the ranks at court--would be disturbed and turmoil would ensue.⁴ They remembered how it had happened in the Wars of the Roses following the

(1) G. B. Harrison, Shakespeare under Elizabeth, New York, 1933. P. 234.

(2) Palmer, op. cit., p. 118. Shakespeare, Vol. I, N.Y., 1927

(3) J. Dover Wilson, The Essential Shakespeare, 1932. P. 15.

(4) Ibid., p. 16.

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- (3) J. Dover Wilson, The Essential Shakespeare, 1932, p. 15.
- (4) ibid., p. 16.

murder of Richard II, and had a horror of civil war which haunted them. Richard, as King of England, was "religiously, dogmatically convinced of his inviolability as a king by the grace of God."¹ He was not alone in that conviction as is illustrated in the Bishop of Carlisle's objection to Bolingbroke's accession to the throne on the grounds of the divine right of kings. Carlisle says,

"What subject can give sentence on his king?
And who sits here that is not Richard's subject?
And shall the figure of God's majesty,
His captain, steward, deputy elect,
Anointed, crowned, planted many years,
Be judg'd by subject and inferior breath?"².

Carlisle foresees the chaos that will arise if Richard is deposed:

"O, if you raise this house against this house,
It will the wofullest division prove
That ever fell upon this cursed earth."³.

To the Elizabethan theater-goers who had seen this prophecy come true in the Henry VI plays of 1591-92 there was an added emphasis. Here the battles followed with such quick succession and the throne passed from house to house with such rapidity that if one were a gardener he wouldn't have known which color rose to cultivate. (The red rose represented the house of Lancaster; the white rose represented the house of York.) In one scene the power of the White Rose faction was dominant for a brief pause, and then the Red Rose followers were back

(1) George M. Brandes, William Shakespeare, Vol. I, N.Y., 1927 P. 146.

(2) Richard II, IV, 1, 121 ff.

(3) Ibid., IV, 1, 145 ff..

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(1) George M. Brander, William Shakespeare, Vol. I, N.Y., 1927, p. 146.

(2) Richard II, IV, 1, 121 ff.

(3) Ibid., IV, 1, 145 ff.

in control. The head of York scarcely grew cold upon a pike outside the city when it was removed to be replaced by the head of the Lancastrian Somerset.

There was nothing so pathetic as Henry VI when he realized that he was not in harmony with the spheres and that his title to the crown through the blood of his grandfather, Henry IV, was not legitimate. Henry IV, or Bolingbroke, had deposed the rightful ruler, Richard II, leading York, descended from a closer heir to the throne, to attempt to get it back. When York forced Henry VI to the wall, he said,

"I know not what to say; my title's weak."¹.

And Bolingbroke knew that he had broken the law of succession in taking Richard's crown. He promised to make a voyage to the holy land.

"To wash this blood off from my guilty hand."².

Tillyard thinks that Shakespeare got his ideas on the doctrine of rebellion from the Book of Homilies for the English Church.³ One of these homilies was published in 1574 with the impressive title "Against Civil Disobedience and Willful Rebellion." Its basic idea was that "it was better to obey a bad king than to run into civil war."⁴ It preached that kings "have their power and strength from God most high."⁵

This placed the kings among the Gods, which gave rise to the

(1) III Henry VI, II, 1, 134.

(2) Richard II, V, vi, 50.

(3) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 64.

(4) Ibid..

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question of what should be done with a bad king. Was a bad king to be judged by his people, and if found guilty of sinning against them, to be removed from the throne? The answer was no; God sends bad kings as a punishment for the sins of the people; and no matter what he does a bad king must be tolerated!

Hall's Chronicle takes the attitude that God punished Henry IV by making his reign unquiet; but he postponed full vengeance until a later generation, that of Henry VI, because Henry humbled himself. Henry VII cultivated the idea that the union of the House of York with that of Lancaster brought about by his marriage with the York heiress "was the providential and happy ending of an organic piece of history."¹ Henry VII needed all the propaganda he could get to convince the English that they should accept him as their lawful ruler. Through his Welsh ancestry (Owen Tudor, direct descendant of Cadwallader, last of the British Kings) he claimed descent from King Arthur, who "was not dead but would return again," and suggested that "he and his heirs were Arthur reincarnate."² In ancient legends the English were told that the return of Arthur was to herald the return of the age of gold; and we mustn't forget that the age of Elizabeth was called golden!

When the Reformation came about in England, the people were left without an outlet for the energies for centuries expended upon the worship of God and the Pope according to

(1) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 29.

(2) Ibid..

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(1) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 20.
(2) Ibid.

the dogma of the Holy Roman Church. They had a surplus spirit of worship. This surplus had to be accommodated; "and if a part found its home in the new veneration of the scriptures, a part went to intensify the feelings of the common people towards their rulers and especially their prince."¹ The Tudors capitalized on this and found it highly convenient to have the people--so long held down in the corporate period of the Roman Church of the Middle Ages--expend their energies in a new direction with such exclamations as "Long live the king!" or "Hurrah for Saint George and Merry England!"

When Elizabeth Tudor came to the throne in 1558, the people had had one hundred years of strong, legitimate government; but they still remembered the Lancasters, whose government had been neither strong nor legitimate.² However, even Elizabeth had fears for the permanency of her crown at various times. All eligible males, and some not so eligible, seemed to be conspiring to marry her. "Proposals for marriage fell thick and fast upon the young queen and came from all quarters of the mainland."³ In the kingdom Leicester, who already had a wife, was courting Elizabeth. His wife had an "accidental" death, which left him free to marry the crown; however, Elizabeth was not inclined to see things his way. From the continent came the mating call of Philip of Spain; Elizabeth

(1) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 66.

(2) Palmer, op. cit., p. 119.

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seemed to be attracted to this match but gave it up on the advice of her counselors.

The question of the succession "was a delicate one: marriage as a solution seemed doubtful (opinions vary as to Elizabeth's capability of bearing children); to name a successor would bring to Elizabeth the problems that had confronted Mary Tudor as Queen."¹ In the years Shakespeare was writing his second tetralogy of history plays "the whole kingdom was on tenter-hooks: who was to succeed Elizabeth Tudor?"² All during her reign Elizabeth was confronted by the marriage problem; but this was not all that disturbed the wearer of the crown. At the very beginning of her reign there had been the question of her own eligibility to rule; for "by the code of the Catholic Church she was illegitimate, and therefore couldn't inherit anything, let alone a crown."³ At the end of her reign her people were bothered by self-appointed liberators, who wished to play the part of Bolingbroke all over again. The most interesting of the latter personages was the Earl of Essex, whose real life tragedy is an illustration of the proximity of contemporary Elizabethan politics to the doctrine of rebellion.

Elizabeth in 1599 was sixty-six years of age; Essex was

(1) Gertrude C. Reese, "The Question of the Succession in Elizabethan Drama," University of Texas Studies in English, Austin, Texas, 1942. P. 66.

(2) Palmer, op. cit., p. 119.

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thirty-two. All he needed for the succession was Elizabeth's voice. Essex tried to build himself up as a King Arthur, then drew parallels between himself and Henry the Fifth. As a youth he was like Prince Hal in that he led a riotous life, had intrigues with the ladies of the court, was fond of low companions, and had shown a change of heart and reformed.¹ Essex was one of the most powerful of the nobles in the court of Elizabeth, and a good soldier to boot. On one occasion he returned from an unsuccessful expedition in Ireland against Tyrone, the Irish rebel, and burst into the Queen's chamber before she was fully dressed. This put him out of favor with the court. Seeing his opportunity for a peaceful succession to the throne slipping away, Essex tried to take the crown by force. His plan, as attempted, was as bold as it was simple. Three of his followers, Lord Mounteagle, Sir Charles Percy, and Sir Joscelin Percy, came to the Globe theater to ask that Richard II, then an old play--in the same sense that a moving picture of four or five years vintage is said to be an old one today--be played the next day. The players at first refused the request, but upon the receipt of a large sum of money agreed to it. On February 7, 1601, the complete version of Richard II was played, and the deposition scene was given long and loud applause by the friends of Essex.²

(1) Wilson, op. cit., p. 96

(2) How seriously the Elizabethans took their drama is illustrated by the fact that the abdication scene was not allowed to be printed under Elizabeth. It appeared for the first time in print in the Fourth Quarto Edition of Richard II in 1608. (Brandes, op. cit., p. 150.)

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The proceedings of the day following this production of Richard II have the same element of the ridiculous that one finds in a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. Essex awoke on a Sunday morning to find that the Queen's Councilors--the Lord Keeper, the Earl of Worcester, Sir William Knollys, and the Lord Chief Justice--were pounding at his gate. They were admitted, but their retainers were asked to remain outside the house. Essex invited these worthies of England into his chamber and put them under guard while he set out to play the part of Bolingbroke.

With about two hundred men Essex started toward the Court of Elizabeth. He tried to gather the commoners about him in typical Bolingbroke style. The citizens watched; Essex and company rushed on through the streets; but no one joined in the revolt. Essex looked for aid from friends in the city, but it did not come. There he stood, a liberator with none that would be liberated. Seeing that the citizens of London were adamant, and that their chances of going to the Tower of London were getting better with each step, the friends of Essex began to waver and to drift away. Essex saw that his attempt to out-Bolingbroke Bolingbroke was a miserable failure; and he returned to Essex House, hoping to hold the Councilors hostage for his own freedom. However, the Councilors had been released, and all that Essex could do was to barricade himself within his house and wait for capture. The Lord Admiral appeared on the scene with a battery of men and their cannon. When Essex saw

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that the Admiral was prepared to lay siege to his domicile, he decided to surrender.

The trial of Essex proved without a doubt that he was guilty of treason, and he was beheaded at the Tower of London. The executioner was busy that week, for he was ordered to execute four other Essex followers found guilty of treason. Two of the latter were quartered and two beheaded.¹ To make the above episode even more like a comic operetta, one might use as a title for it the well known words of the days of the Wars of Roses and call it "Off with their heads!"

We have seen that Richard the Second was the most famous of the examples of a fallen prince to the Elizabethans. Their world, one of order when the spheres were in harmony, was on tenter-hooks over the succession question. They remembered the days of strife, the days when the Lancastrians and Yorkists drafted fathers to fight against sons; but they had seen one hundred years of strong government under the Tudors. There was no reason for the English commoner to rebel against authority. In the ambitions of a Leicester or an Essex they saw only more bloodshed and poverty. Henry VII had proclaimed the return of the Arthurian line of king, and by careful propaganda entrenched himself on the English throne. Elizabeth, his descendant, had brought back the age of gold. Did the English want another deposition scene in their spacious times?

(1) Harrison, op. cit., p. 234-240

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Did they have a desire for another split between the leading houses of the English hierarchy? I do not think so. The fall of princes was interesting to both the nobility and the people who sat in the pit. To them it was instruction as well as entertainment. What better subject could a playwright choose to write upon than one such as Richard II?

In Chapter One, the Chronicle Play took root from the medieval drama. It branched into two main stems: the legendary and the factual history play. It was stimulated by the contemporary interest in the fall of princes growing out of the political situation in England. The Chronicle Play grew into maturity in the last decade of the sixteenth century. In this "golden age" nearly eighty Chronicle Plays were written.¹ They covered every reign from Edward the Confessor to Elizabeth.² Then with the death of Queen Elizabeth, this type of drama lost its political significance; it withered, went to seed in such plays as Henry VIII, and was overshadowed by its companion species, the tragedies and comedies.

The Chronicle Plays were gaining in popularity at the very time Shakespeare left Stratford to try his luck in London. As a holder of horses for theater goers and then as a call-boy,³ Shakespeare was probably exposed to many of the history plays.

(1) F. E. Schelling, The English Chronicle Play, New York, 1932, p. 52.

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Chapter Four

The Evolution of the Chronicle Play

The immediate sources of Richard II were the Chronicles of Holinshed and Hall, and Marlowe's Edward II. But the type of drama developed by Marlowe and Shakespeare into their twin peaks--Edward II and Richard II--was not new. As has been shown in Chapter One, the Chronicle Play took root from the medieval drama. It branched into two main stems: the legendary and the factual history play. It was stimulated by the contemporary interest in the fall of princes growing out of the political situation in England. The Chronicle Play grew into maturity in the last decade of the Sixteenth Century. In this "golden age" nearly eighty Chronicle Plays were written.¹ They covered every reign from Edward the Confessor to Elizabeth.² Then with the death of Queen Elizabeth, this type of drama lost its political significance; it withered, went to seed in such plays as Henry VIII, and was overshadowed by its companion species, the tragedies and comedies.

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Tillyard says, "That Shakespeare owed something to some of these plays is obvious."¹.

In the opening decade of Elizabeth's reign there had been a translation of almost all of Seneca's plays.² This led to such plays as Gorboduc (1561), Jocasta (1566), The Spanish Tragedy (1585-89), and Tamburlaine the Great. The English writers were "rediscovering the meaning of ancient tragedy."³.

The Roman tragedies of Seneca were the models for Thomas Legge's Richard Tertius Tragedia. This play, written in Latin, was acted at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1579. Academically it was a great success. It was the first recorded drama which dealt with the actual history of England. Its author followed Sir Thomas More's biography (1513). This play may not have been a turning point of great importance for the Chronicle Play, but it "must have had no small influence on University men such as Marlowe, Lodge, and Peele."⁴.

Richard Tertius Tragedia was a trilogy. It was written in three parts of five acts each to be given on three separate evenings.⁵ King Richard III here lacks the powerful force of the single, domineering, Machiavellian villain that Shakespeare portrayed. Yet the play was "prophetic of high success for English Chronicle Tragedy."⁶.

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(2) Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy, Berkeley, California, 1936. P. 353.

(3) Ibid., p. 364.

(4) Schelling, op. cit., p. 22.

(5) Farnham, op. cit., p. 264.

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George Peele's Lochrine, a play written in 1586, was also in the Senecan form. Here we see "popular drama dealing with the deeds of England's kings for the first time."¹ Written in the style of Gorboduc, this play was the first to combine the Senecan drama with the crude and loosely constructed plays of patriotism. It does include the death of Gloucester,

There were two plays of unknown origin which dealt with events in the reign of Richard the Second. These were The Life and Death of Jack Straw, a notable rebel in England: who was killed in Smithfield by the Lord Mayor of London,² and Thomas of Woodstock, or as it is sometimes called, The First Part of Richard II.

The Life and Death of Jack Straw was short and slight. It was "an historical interlude."³ Its background was the peasants revolt in Essex and Kent of 1381. The main character, John Tyler, also known as Wat Tyler, was the leader of the rebellious mob. In the play he went under the name he called himself, Jack Straw. There is little unity to the play. It concerns a man of low degree who becomes unruly through ambition.⁴ It "is conventionally sound on the evils of rebellion, the doctrine being put in the mouth not only of those in authority but in that of Nobs, who, though one of the rebels comments chorically on their excesses."⁵ Its primitive plot

(1) Schelling, op. cit., p. 27.

(2) Ibid., p. 45.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Farnham, op. cit., p. 380.

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presents a contrast between the rustic clowning of the rebels and the dignity of King Richard.¹ Chambers says that this play might be a source used by Shakespeare, "if he had one."²

Jack Straw does not cover the events leading up to the murder or the actual murder of Richard the Second. It shows him as a young king. It does include the death of Gloucester, over which Bolingbroke and Mowbray had their quarrel in Shakespeare's Richard II.³ The historical background of Jack Straw and his revolt is interesting in that one gets an entirely different view of King Richard. In Shakespeare's play we have a mature and temperamental poet as king. In this play of Richard's early life we see the boy-king, who at the age of fourteen saved the situation and his crown from the rebels.⁴

The peasants had asked for the abolition of feudal subjection and enslavery. With Jack Straw as their leader they had marched on London. Marcham describes the event as follows:

"Richard bravely stepped forward and told the peasants that he would be their leader and that they could entirely depend on him. He had already granted their demands; it remained for him only to ride at the head of their columns and to lead them out of the city. This the king did with such success that those who had taken part in the first great popular rising quietly dispersed and left to the government the decision of the question of what it would do to carry out its promises."⁵

Of course the rest of the story is not as noble. The promises

(1) Farnham, op. cit., p. 379.

(2) E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, Volume I, Oxford, 1930. P. 352.

(3) Ibid., p. 352.

(4) Gordon Daviot, Richard of Bordeaux, London, 1933. Introduction, p. x.

(5) F. G. Marcham, A History of England, New York, 1937. P.215.

presents a contrast between the rustic clowning of the rebels and the dignity of King Richard.¹ Chambers says that this play might be a source used by Shakespeare, "if he had one."² Jack Straw does not cover the events leading up to the murder or the actual murder of Richard the Second. It shows him as a young king. It does include the death of Gloucester, over which Bolingbroke and Mowbray had their quarrel in Shakespeare's Richard II.³ The historical background of Jack Straw and his revolt is interesting in that one gets an entirely different view of King Richard. In Shakespeare's play we have a mature and temperamental poet as king. In this play of Richard's early life we see the boy-king, who at the age of fourteen saved the situation and his crown from the rebels.⁴ The peasants had asked for the abolition of feudal and section and slavery. With Jack Straw as their leader they had marched on London. Marcham describes the event as follows:

"Richard bravely stepped forward and told the peasants that he would be their leader and that they could entirely depend on him. He had already granted their demands; it remained for him only to ride at the head of their columns and to lead them out of the city. This the king did with such success that those who had taken part in the first great popular rising quietly dispersed and left to the government the decision of what it would do to carry out its promises."⁵

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made by the government were promptly forgotten and all of the leaders of the revolt were executed.

Thomas of Woodstock is described by Tillyard as "one of the best of the Chronicle Plays."¹ Woodstock was the Duke of Gloucester murdered at Richard's request. This murder took place before the events of Shakespeare's Richard II. This has led some critics to believe that Shakespeare was "taking up the story where Woodstock drops it."² This is to be doubted. Schelling emphatically denies it, saying that "Shakespeare didn't know Thomas of Woodstock."³

This play is of the De Casibus type. It shows the fall of the Duke of Gloucester and is "in full accord with the tradition of The Mirror for Magistrates."⁴ It concerns the earlier events in Richard II's reign: his trouble with proud and overbearing uncles, his marriage to Anne of Bohemia, the farming out of the kingdom to parasites, and the arranging for the murder of his uncle, Woodstock. Even the king's "friends", Bushy and Green, appear.⁵

Thomas of Woodstock was published in 1870 by Halliwell under the title of A Tragedy of King Richard the Second. It is possible that Shakespeare had a hand in writing a good part of this play,⁶ but as it is not in the First Folio, and is not mentioned by contemporary critics, it must be relegated to

- (1) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 114.
- (2) Ibid., p. 115.
- (3) Schelling, op. cit., p. 108.
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- (5) Ibid., p. 115.
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the Shakespeare Apocrypha.

The mighty line of Marlowe juts out at this point (1588) with all the conspicuousness and prominence of a beacon in the dark. Marlowe's influence on Shakespeare, in particular his influence on Richard II, cannot be overlooked. Marlowe's contribution to all later playwrights was his turning of blank verse into a mighty line. His ranting, bombastic characters worked over for effect had no little influence on the later characters of Shakespeare; however, that is the material for another chapter.

Marlowe was a University graduate. He knew the classical rules for writing drama. He knew Seneca and even quotes from him at times in his plays. Yet he took what Farnham calls "a youthful delight in letting himself go."¹ For example, in Edward II the Earle of Leicester speaks these lines from Seneca's Thyestes (613-14):²

"Quem dies vidit veniens superbum,
Hunc dies vidit fugiens iacentem."

He took the "De Casibus tragedy" of the Middle Ages and completely reversed it in his Tamburlaine. In this play he presented a Scythian shepherd, who had such power of oratory that he persuaded Zenocrate, the daughter of the Soldan of Egypt, to be his mistress, and persuaded a Persian general to give up his allegiance and join his thousand horsemen to Tamburlaine's five hundred men.³ Marlowe led Tamburlaine through two five-act plays with success after success to his credit. Time

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after time one looks for this proud general's fall, but it does not come! When Tamburlaine dies at the end of Part Two, it is a natural death. Even on the last day of his life, while sick and weak, the mighty Tamburlaine routs his enemies by his mere presence on the field of battle!¹

Christopher Marlowe was born in 1564, the same year as Shakespeare. Their beginnings were about the same. Marlowe was the son of a shoemaker.² Shakespeare was the son of a meat cutter and dealer in farm products.³ Marlowe received his B.A. from Cambridge in 1584, and his M.A. in 1587. Here he outdistanced Shakespeare, who had only a rural education at Stratford. Marlowe's plays followed one upon the other. Tamburlaine the Great was an immediate success in 1588, and The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus followed immediately upon it.⁴

Shakespeare and Marlowe have so much in common that it is hard to think that they were not fellow-playwrights in London. During Marlowe's lifetime it was Shakespeare who followed and Marlowe who took the lead. Shakespeare usually emulated Marlowe and then did him one better by making his lines more musical and by using a better type of imagery.

Although the play Edward II exerted the most influence over Shakespeare when he wrote Richard II, brief glimpses of the other plays are seen in such scenes as the mirror scene (Richard II, IV, 1, 281 ff.), and in the personification of

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(2) Felix E. Schelling and Matthew W. Black, Typical Elizabethan Plays, New York, 1926. P. 3.

(3) Neilson and Thorndike, op. cit., p. 18.

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death by Richard as he raves on the Coast of Wales. (Richard II, III, 11, 160-163).

"The mirror scene is certainly an imitation--conscious or unconscious or derisive--of the most famous passage in Dr. Faustus."¹ Here Faustus has brought Helen of Troy back to life:

"Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss."²

Note the identical words, "Was this the face," repeated in Richard II:

"Was this the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
That, like the sun, did make beholders wink?
Was this the face that faced so many follies,
And was at last out-faced by Bolingbroke?"³

A passage in the third act seems to have its origin in Tamburlaine I. Here Tamburlaine has just ordered the Virgins of Damascus to their death. Tamburlaine says of his sword's point:

"For here sits Death, there sits imperious Death
Keeping his circuit by the slicing edge."⁴

Shakespeare's personification of death is very similar in the following lines:

" for within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps Death his court; and there the antic sits,
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp."⁵

These lines from Richard II may be emulation; however they are a good example of where Shakespeare betters Marlowe.

- (1) Bakeless, op. cit., p. 895.
- (2) Christopher Marlowe, The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, l. 1328-1330.
- (3) Richard II, IV, 1, 281-286.
- (4) Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine, Part One, l. 1891-1892.
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In the year 1588 there were other plays produced which cannot be overlooked. They are: The True Tragedy of Richard III, The Troublesome reign of King John, and The Misfortunes of Arthur.

The True Tragedy of Richard III was the source of Shakespeare's Richard III, which was written in 1593. The author of The True Tragedy of Richard III used Legge's play as a source, but it is doubtful that Shakespeare knew Legge's play. This drama may have been written by Thomas Lodge.¹ As a political drama it emphasized the evils of civil war and in this respect was much like the plays of Shakespeare's first tetralogy of history plays: I, II, and III Henry VI, and Richard III.

The Troublesome Reign of King John is of unknown authorship. It is described by Schelling as "a typical specimen of the earlier chronicle history before it was transformed by the genius of Marlowe and Shakespeare."² When published in 1592 it had the grand title of The Troublesome Raigne of John King of England, with the discoverie of King Richard Cordelions Base Sonne (vulgarly named, the Bastard Fawconbridge): also the death of King John at Swinstead Abbey.³ The author here wrote without attention to unity. He had three main lines of incident, and "the play fails to rise above the plane of a survey."⁴

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The Legendary Chronicle Play continued to be popular on the stage of England from the time of Gorboduc (1561-62) down to the closing of the theaters by the Puritans under Cromwell (1642). Plays of this type were: The True Chronicle History of King Leir, and his three daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella, a play from which Shakespeare took his Lear, which differed from the earlier play in that it did not have a happy ending; The Misfortunes of Arthur, a Senecan tragedy concerned with Mordred's incestuous love for his step-mother, Queen Guenevora;¹ and Shakespeare's own King Lear.

Robert Greene's Scottish History of James IV, Slaine at Flodden, Entermixed with pleasant comedie presented by Oberam King of Fayeries, was first given in 1589. There is some doubt as to whether this play can be called a Chronicle Play. Tillyard says that "the chronicling consists in the title."² The play was a romance and not a history; it was no more a history than Greene's better play Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay. Very little of it took place in Scotland, and James is not slain at Flodden as the title suggests.³

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay is of more interest. It is connected with the chronicle history plays through its Dramatis

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personae and that is about all the connection. King Henry III appears; so does Edward, his son, who was later Edward I. However, they are both overshadowed by the scholar Bacon, who is very much like Dr. Faustus except that he fights on the side of good instead of evil. The Kings, Emperors, and Princess in the play are but an audience for the two Friars and Miles, their sleepy servant.¹

George Peele's play on Edward I is an example of an imitative and adaptive talent.² Peele was writing to please all strata of society as the complete title indicates: The Famous Chronicle of King Edward the First, sirnamed Edward Longshankes, with his return from the Holy Land. Also the life of Llevellan rebell in Wales, lastly the sinking of Queen Elinor who sunk at Charingcrosse, and rose again at Potters-hith, now named Queenehith.³ Peele had no historical basis for much of this play. He disfigured good Queen Elinor and made an absurd monster of her. He contributed very little to the evolution of the Chronicle Play.

Edward III (1590) is an admirable Chronicle Play in which Shakespeare seems to have had a hand.⁴ It is well constructed and well written. This play, performed in 1590, "easily maintained the literary excellence of the plays on Henry VI in the qualities of spirited dialogue, picturesque phrase, and

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In writing Richard II Shakespeare was indebted to these early plays little in so far as ideas on history or actual historical facts go. However, these early writers of Chronicle Plays passed on to Shakespeare a medium to use in the presentation of his ideas. Tillyard says, "He was interested in history from an early age. That there existed a form of drama ready made into which he could infuse without violence the thoughts that were troubling his mind was a rare piece of luck."² It was luck also that Shakespeare was born in England, for had he been born in France or Italy he would not have had "a native Chronicle Play with which to experiment."³

We have now seen that the early English Chronicle Play evolved into a very popular and very nationalistic drama. What thoughts went on in the mind of the great dramatist as he sat down to pen his living lines we'll never know. All we can do is to examine the material he had at hand in his workshop, and conjecture as to its utilization by Shakespeare!

(1) Schelling, op. cit., p. 60.

(2) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 126.

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Chapter Five

The Influence of Marlowe's Edward II

Richard II was the first of Shakespeare's historic tragedies written completely by Shakespeare himself. Parrott says, "The play of Richard II possesses a special interest for the student of Shakespeare's development as a poet and dramatist, since it represents his first really independent effort in the field of historic tragedy."¹.

The critics agree for the most part that Shakespeare, in writing Richard II, used Christopher Marlowe's Edward II as his model. Shakespeare imitated, it is true; but he imitated the best. For Schelling says that "Edward II may be considered the final evolution of the tragic type of English Chronicle Play."².

Marlowe had taken the lead, and Shakespeare, in his Richard II, "was writing historical tragedy rather than the conventional chronicle play."³.

Even though the model Shakespeare "had in his mind's eye was Marlowe's finest tragedy, Edward II,"⁴. Richard II was more than imitation. It was better composed. It had a "full-blooded vitality of style" beside which Marlowe was "monotonously dry and sombre."⁵. Briggs says that "as compared with Shakespeare's plays, Marlowe's at once appear deficient in ideas;

(1) Thomas Marc Parrott, Shakespeare, New York, 1938. P. 301.

(2) Schelling, op. cit., p. 74.

(3) Parrott, op. cit., p. 302.

(4) George M. Brandes, William Shakespeare, New York, 1927. P. 141.

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The full title of Marlowe's play, as published in 1594, was The Troublesome Raigne and Lamentable death of Edward the Second, King of England; with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer.⁴ Shakespeare's play, as published in the First Quarto of 1597, was entitled The Tragedye of Richard the Second.⁵

Marlowe added a new twist to the old Chronicle Play. His Edward II was differentiated from the older plays by "its superior selectiveness of material, its suppression of scenes of comic diversion and all matter extraneous to the central idea, its conscious constructiveness and self-restraint, all tending towards a fuller artistic and dramatic unity; lastly its attempt at a higher and more serious conception of character and the infusion of an elevated poetical spirit throughout the whole."⁶

Shakespeare took for his subject the reign of an English king whose downfall paralleled the fall of Edward the Second. Each king was weak and unprincipled, "a prey to favorites," struggling "to maintain his will and later his crown against

- (1) Briggs, op. cit., p. 182.
- (2) Brandes, op. cit., p. 142.
- (3) Farnham, op. cit., p. 415.
- (4) Schelling, op. cit., p. 65.
- (5) Hardin Craig, Shakespeare, Chicago, 1931. P. 312.
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Marlowe added a new twist to the old Chronicle Play. His Edward II was differentiated from the older plays by "its superior selectiveness of material, its suppression of scenes of comic diversion and all matter extraneous to the central idea, its conscious constructiveness and self-restraint, all tending towards a fuller artistic and dramatic unity; lastly its attempt at a higher and more serious conception of character and the infusion of an elevated poetical spirit throughout the whole."⁶

Shakespeare took for his subject the reign of an English king whose downfall paralleled the fall of Edward the Second. Each king was weak and unprincipled, "a prey to favorites," struggling "to maintain his will and later his crown against

- (1) Briggs, op. cit., p. 182.
- (2) Briggs, op. cit., p. 142.
- (3) Farnham, op. cit., p. 415.
- (4) Schelling, op. cit., p. 65.
- (5) Hardin Craig, Shakespeare, Chicago, 1931, p. 312.
- (6) Schelling, op. cit., p. 74.

a group of rebellious nobles whom his arrogance and injustice had estranged and incensed."¹.

Edward II was "another study of tragic weakness in a king who cannot dominate his barons, but it is a true innovation in its choice of a protagonist so consistently and pathologically weak as Edward."². Here Marlowe had concentrated upon the fall of a prince with a "sustained psychological penetration such as no dramatist had before achieved."³.

Richard was like Edward in that he had "a certain pitiful nobility in his bewilderment."⁴. He was also a fallen prince. He was a weak king. He likens himself to the De Casibus type in the past:

"For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground
And tell sad stories of the death of kings:
How some have been deposed; some slain in war;
Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed;
Some poison'd by their wives; some sleeping kill'd;
All murder'd: for within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps death his court and there the antic sits..."⁵.

Richard II is a play without a hero, and therefore is a poor play, according to Baker.⁶ He seems to be alone in his judgment.

(1) Schelling, op. cit., p. 65.

(2) Farnham, op. cit., p. 407.

(3) Ibid., p. 408.

(4) Ibid., p. 415

(5) Richard II, III, ii, 155-162.

(6) George P. Baker, The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist, New York, 1907. P. 152. (Baker says, p. 143:

"The prime duty of the writer (of a chronicle play) was to reproduce the historical situation and to emphasize its moral purport, rather than to aim at perfect characterization or dialogue attractive in itself.")

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- (7) Schelling, op. cit., p. 65.
- (8) Farnham, op. cit., p. 407.
- (9) Ibid., p. 408.
- (10) Ibid., p. 415.
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Craig says, "The relation of Richard II to Marlowe's Edward II is more than accidental. Marlowe has done a new and significant thing in discovering a historical character who might serve as the hero of a tragic plot and thus give the Chronicle Play the effect of tragedy."³ Shakespeare had followed the early Marlowe in Richard III. He followed his later manner in Richard II.⁴

Ingram turns the tables and says that it was Shakespeare who influenced Marlowe. He suggests that Shakespeare wrote a part of Edward II.⁵

Charles Lamb was much impressed by Marlowe's play. His much quoted remark cannot be overlooked: "The reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in Edward furnished hints which Shakespeare scarce improved in his Richard II, and the death scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted."⁶

(1) E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, Volume I, Oxford, 1930. P. 351.

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(3) Craig, op. cit., p. 314

(4) Ibid.

(5) John H. Ingram, Christopher Marlowe and his Associates, London, 1904. P. 201.

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In examining the plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare, one must realize that although certain parallels exist, plagiarism was probably further from the latter's mind than is generally accepted; and by plagiarism I mean literally kidnapping, taking over another's piece and calling it one's own. In his early period Shakespeare was writing to raise himself by the bootstraps. He was out for success.

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But Shakespeare was writing for the theater-goers, for the people of Elizabethan London. As Stoll says, "He was writing rapidly and impetuously, careless and thoughtless of the cool and carping reader in his closet."².

Shakespeare had been exposed to Marlowe's mighty lines; but it is hard to take the next step without more evidence and

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Harold O. White says, in speaking of the plagiarism in England from Sidney to Jonson:

"Shakespeare's practise of imitative composition is too well known to require comment. It is a commonplace to say that the originality of his genius never appears more clearly than when one of his works is compared with the sources which he found useful in writing it. Whatever he wanted, he took; the results compose the best possible body of proof for the classical theory that literary excellence depends, not on the writer's ability to fabricate plots, but on his power to do something original with a plot, whenever he gets it."³

Shakespeare, no doubt, admired Marlowe, for the latter was at his peak when Shakespeare was starting. Marlowe's untimely death in 1593 came just at the time Shakespeare was getting his first praise for his Henry VI plays and his early comedies. Shakespeare's association with Marlowe led to his emulating him throughout his career. The play under consideration is not the only one to show this. There are parallels between several of Marlowe's and Shakespeare's characters: Barabas the Jew and his daughter, Abigail, in The Jew Of Malta are very much like the later Jew, Shylock, and his daughter, Jessica, in The

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Merchant of Venice. Kent in Edward II resembles Kent in King Lear. The murderers of Edward the Second are certainly akin to the murderers of the two little princes in the Tower of London in Richard III. The lofty hero-villain Tamburlaine of I and II Tamburlaine the Great resembles the Machiavellian King in Richard III. The frail and immoral Queen Isabella of Edward II is very much like the weak, hastily wed Gertrude of Hamlet.¹

In Richard II the emulation of Marlowe by Shakespeare is seen quite clearly. The subject matter was parallel to begin with, and I have no doubt that Shakespeare had a copy of Edward II before him as he penned his lines.

Many parallels that may be drawn between the two plays are historical. One cannot say that Shakespeare had one eye on Marlowe's play as he was copying history from the Chronicles! However, within the plays themselves is seen good internal evidence that Shakespeare followed Marlowe.

Any of the following parallels are historical, no imitation was needed to make them appear in Richard II:

Edward II

Richard II

Play opens with accession of Edward II to the throne..1307. Gaveston returns from overseas.

Play opens April 29, 1398.

Bolingbroke returns from overseas to challenge Mowbray.

Gaveston was banished from England in 1307, again in 1308, and again in 1311.

Bolingbroke is banished for six years, Mowbray for life. September 16, 1398.

Isabella and supporters cross the channel from France, land in England.....1326.

Bolingbroke and his supporters cross the channel from France, land in England. June, July 1399.

(1) J. E. Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, The Man in his Time, New York, 1937. P. 296.

in England.....1526. Land in England. June, July 1529.
Isabella and supporters cross the channel from France,
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Edward, King of England, was deposed by powerful nobles. 1327.	Richard, King of England, was deposed by Bolingbroke and fol- lowers... September 30, 1399.
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Edward was wickedly murdered, the murder committed by hired killers.....1327.	Richard was wickedly murdered, the murder committed by follo- wers of Henry IV. January 1400.
1.	2.

The following parallels are historical ones stressed in the plays: Each king was "odious in prosperity," but "rises to dignity in his overthrow or adversity."³ Each king misused his office, was misled by favorites, was blind until his impending doom, was greatly wronged, and appeals to our sympathies at time of death.⁴

There is the possibility that Shakespeare chose the reign of Richard the Second because of the close historical likeness to the reign of Edward the Second. He may have seen Edward II when it was first produced in 1592 and noted the similarity to the life of Richard, whom he mentions in his Henry VI plays and so must have had in mind. More than likely the players of Lord Strange's Company, with whom Shakespeare worked, saw how great a success Marlowe's play on the fall of a prince was having, so asked Shakespeare to get to work on a similar prince who had a similar fall!

(1) George L. Kittredge, Sixteen Plays of Shakespeare, Boston, 1946. P. 428.

(2) W. D. Briggs, Marlowe's Edward II, London, 1914. P. 99.

(3) Schelling, op. cit., p. 66.

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There are many indications in the plays themselves to illustrate their proximity. The Dramatis Personae correspond closely. In each play one sees the three favorites of a king. In Richard II they are Bushy, Bagot, and Green. In Edward II they are Piers Gaveston, Spencer Senior, and Spencer Junior, his son. In each play the Queen is said to be unfaithful to her husband. The rebels Northumberland and his son, Hotspur, resemble the Senior Mortimer and his nephew, Roger Mortimer. Briggs says, "It is indeed no rash assumption that Marlowe's Mortimer furnished the model for Shakespeare's Hotspur. The latter, no doubt, is the nobler figure and better drawn, but the two conceptions are at bottom practically identical. Beyond the name of Hotspur and the remark that he was a lord of high spirit, Holinshed supplies little for the figure of Henry Percy."¹.

Mortimer despises the effeminacy of Gaveston much as Hotspur despises the lord he met on the battlefield in Henry IV, Part I. Compare the following lines:

Mortimer Junior:².

"Uncle, his wanton humor grieves not me;
But this I scorn, that one so basely born
Should by his sovereign's favor grow so pert,
And riot it with the treasure of the realm...
I have not seen a dapper Jack so brisk;
He wears a short Italian hooded cloak,
Larded with pearl, and in his Tuscan cap,
A jewel of more value than the crown."

Hotspur:³.

"Came there a certain lord, neat and trimly dress'd,

(1) Briggs, op. cit., p. 111.

(2) Edward II, I, iv, 401 ff..

(3) Henry IV, Part I, I, 111, 33 ff..

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Mortimer supplies the element of treason much as Hotspur supplies the lord he met on the battlefield in Henry IV, Part I. Compare the following lines:

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 "Uncle, his warden humor grieves not me;
 But this I scorn, that one so deadly born
 Should by his sovereignty's favor grow so great,
 And riot it with the treasure of the realm...
 I have not seen a deeper lack of duty;
 He wears a short Italian hooded cloak,
 Larded with pearl, and in his Tuscan cap,
 A jewel of more value than the crown."

Hotspur:³
 "Come there a certain lord, neat and trimly dressed,"

(1) British, op. cit., p. 111.
 (2) Edward III, I, iv, 401 ff.
 (3) Henry IV, Part I, I, iii, 35 ff.

Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new reap'd
 Show'd like a stubble land at harvest home.
 He was perfumed like a milliner,
 And twixt his finger and his thumb he held
 A pouncet box, which ever and anon
 He gave his nose, and took't way again."

The following is a list of parallels within the plays:

Edward II

Richard II

One figure is masterfully dominant-Mortimer.

One figure is masterfully dominant-Bolingbroke. 1.

The play begins with a fiery dispute between Edward and the nobles.

The play begins with a fiery dispute between Bolingbroke and Mowbray. 2.

Edward makes a levy on his subject's property, which fact leads to the catastrophe.

Richard makes a levy on his subject's property, which fact leads to the catastrophe.

Edward is caught unprepared by the return of an absent enemy.

Richard is caught unprepared by the return of an absent enemy.

After a dramatic hesitation, Edward is forced to abdicate.

After a dramatic hesitation, Richard is forced to abdicate.

In anger Edward destroys a physical object, a letter.

In anger Richard destroys a physical object, a mirror. 3.

Edward is murdered and the coffin is carried on the stage in the final scene.

Richard is murdered and the coffin is carried on the stage in the final scene.

The favorites of Edward are put to death. They are hanged.

The favorites of Richard are put to death. They are executed.

Queen Isabella is accused of infidelity.

The Queen of King Richard is accused of infidelity. 4.

The Queen is guilty of adultery.

Bolingbroke accuses the favorites of "breaking possession of a royal bed."

(III, 1, 13)

(1) J. E. Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe: a Biographical and Critical Study, Harvard Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge, 1936. P. 540.

(2) Ibid., p. 892.

(3) Ibid., p. 893.

(4) Ibid., p. 894.

Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new reap'd
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Richard II

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nant-Mortimer. One figure is masterfully dominant-Bolingbroke.
2. The play begins with a fiery dispute between Edward and the nobles. The play begins with a fiery dispute between Bolingbroke and Mowbray.
3. Edward makes a levy on his subject's property, which leads to the catastrophe. Richard makes a levy on his subject's property, which leads to the catastrophe.
4. Edward is caught unprepared by the return of an absent enemy. Richard is caught unprepared by the return of an absent enemy.
5. After a dramatic hesitation, Edward is forced to abdicate. After a dramatic hesitation, Richard is forced to abdicate.
6. In anger Edward destroys a physical object, a letter. In anger Richard destroys a physical object, a mirror.
7. Edward is murdered and the coffin is carried on the stage in the final scene. Richard is murdered and the coffin is carried on the stage in the final scene.
8. The favorites of Edward are put to death. They are hanged. The favorites of Richard are put to death. They are executed.
9. Queen Isabella is accused of infidelity. The Queen of King Richard is accused of infidelity.
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The verbal parallels are many. The following are of especial interest:

- Edw. "Father, this life contemplative is heaven.^{1.}
O, that I might this life in quiet lead!"
(Edward II, IV, vi, 20-21)
- Rich. "I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage."
(Richard II, III, iii, 147-8)
- Rice. "For we shall see them shorter by the heads."
(Edward II, IV, vi, 93)
- York. "The time hath been,
Would you have been so brief with him, he
would
Have been so brief with you, to shorten you,
For taking so the head, your whole head's
length."
(Richard II, III, iii, 11 ff.)
- Rice. "Spencer the son, created Earl of Gloucester,
Is with that smooth-tongued scholar Baldock
gone,
And Shipped but late for Ireland with the king."
(Edward II, IV, v, 66-69)
- Bagot. "I will to Ireland to his majesty.
Farewell: if heart's presages are not vain
We three here part that ne'er shall meet again."
(Richard II, II, ii, 141-3)
- Edw.III. "Go fetch my father's hearse, where it shall lie;
And bring my funeral robes."
(Edward II, V, vi, 92, 93)
- Exton. "Great king, within this coffin I present
Thy buried fear: herein all breathless lies
The mightiest of all thy greatest enemies,
Richard of Bordeaux, by me hither brought."
(Richard II, V, vi, 29 ff.)
- Edw.III. "Here comes the hearse; help me to mourn, my lords."
(Edward II, V, vi, 96)
- King H. "March sadly after; grace my mournings here."
(Richard II, V, vi, 49)

(1) Briggs, op. cit., p. 177.

(2) Ibid., p. 178.

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The verbal parallels are many. The following are of

Edw. "Or if I live, let me forget myselfe."¹.

(Edward II, V, 1, 111)

Rich. "Or that I could forget what I have been,
Or not remember what I must be now."

(Richard II, III, 111, 138-39)

Edw. "So shall not England's vines be perished,²
But Edward's name survives, though Edward dies."

(Edward II, V, 1, 47-48)

Duch. "Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself are one,
Were as seven vials of his sacred blood,
Or seven fair branches springing from one root."

(Richard II, I, 11, 11 ff.)

Gav. "Is all my hope turnd to this hell of greefe?"³

Edw. "Rend not my heart with thy too piercing words:
Thou from this land, I from myself am banisht."

(Edward II, I, iv, 117 ff.)

Queen. "And must we be divided, must we part?"

Rich. "Ay, hand from hand, my love, and heart from heart."

Queen. "Banish us both and send the king with me."

(Richard II, V, 1, 80 ff.)

Briggs suggests that the above parting of Gaveston and Edward was Shakespeare's source for the parting of Richard and his Queen.⁴ Kittredge disagrees and says that the parting of Richard from his Queen was Shakespeare's own.⁵

(1) Briggs, op. cit., p. 185.

(2) Ibid., p. 182.

(3) Ibid., p. 124.

(4) Ibid.,

(5) Kittredge, op. cit., p. 427.

- (1) Briggs, op. cit., p. 185.
- (2) Ibid., p. 185.
- (3) Ibid., p. 124.
- (4) Ibid., p. 124.
- (5) Kittredge, op. cit., p. 427.

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 Were as seven vials of his sacred blood,
 Duch. "Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself are one,
 (Edward II, V, i, 47-48)
 Edw. "So shall not England's vines be parted,
 But Edward's name survives, though Edward dies."

(Richard II, III, iii, 138-39)
 Or not remember what I must be now."
 Rich. "Or that I could forget what I have been,
 (Edward II, V, i, 111)
 Edw. "Or if I live, let me forget myself."

"The clearest borrowing is in the abdication scene" at the end of Act IV.¹ In Richard II York comes in from "plume-pluck'd Richard" to say that Richard yields his crown to Bolingbroke:

"Great Duke of Lancaster, I come to thee
From plume-pluck'd Richard; who with willing soul
Adopts thee heir, and his high sceptre yields
To the possession of thy royal hand:
Ascend his throne, descending now from him;
And long live Henry, fourth of that name!"².

In Edward II the Bishop of Winchester enters, saying simply:

"The king hath willingly resigned his crown."³.

In Act IV of Richard II Bolingbroke is at Westminster Hall. He has asked that Richard be brought forth. Richard enters and asks why he was called upon. His answer comes from York, who says:

"To do that office of thine own good will
Which tired majesty did make thee offer,
The resignation of thy state and crown
To Henry Bolingbroke."⁴.

Impetuous Richard answers:

"Give me the crown. Here, cousin, seize
the crown;"⁵.

This closely resembles the business of Leicester taking the crown from the king in Edward II. In this latter case Edward is at Killingworth Castle. Leicester has been sent by the rebels

(1) J. E. Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe: a Biographical and Critical Study, Harvard Ph.D Thesis, Cambridge, 1936. P. 895.

(2) Richard II, IV, i, 107-112.

(3) Edward II, V, ii, 28.

(4) Richard II, IV, i, 177-180

(5) Ibid., line 181.

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(2) Richard II, IV, 1, 107-112.
(3) Edward II, V, 11, 28.
(4) Richard II, IV, 1, 177-180.
(5) Id., line 181.

to get the crown. Edward says:

"Here, take my crown, the life of Edward too."¹.

He puts his crown on his head, He rages. He refuses to resign, then changes his mind and decides to give up the crown.

"Here, receive my crown."².

In the same scenes a paper is brought in for the kings to read. In Richard II it is a list of accusations, which Northumberland insists Richard read. In Edward II it is a paper brought in by Berkeley delivering the king from Leicester's charge on Mortimer's order. Richard does not destroy the paper as does Edward. Instead he calls for a mirror, which he breaks with the words:

"A brittle glory shineth in this face:
As brittle as this glory is the face;
(Dashes the glass against the ground)
For, there it is crack'd in a hundred shivers."³.

In tearing up the paper Edward said:

"By Mortimer, whose name is written here!
Well may I rend his name that rends my heart!
This poor revenge has something eased my mind.
So may his limbs be torn as is this paper."⁴.

Each of the objects stands for a person. The mirror stands for Richard. The letter stands for Mortimer. Richard sees his finish symbolized by the cracked glass. Edward hopes for the death of Mortimer as the paper is torn.

(1) Edward II, V, 1, 57.

(2) Ibid., l. 98.

(3) Richard II, IV, 1, 286-289.

(4) Edward II, V, 1, 139-142.

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In Shakespeare's scene Richard "is intellectually the master of the situation."¹ Edward seems dull and unable to cope with the problem of resigning. Richard is fanciful and imaginative. "His disdainful compliance places his opponents at a moral disadvantage. Even Henry, distinctly the greater man as regards the men as a whole, appears dull and brutal in contrast."² As compared with Shakespeare's scene, Marlowe's seems lacking in ideas. Yet Marlowe had definitely taken the lead, and Shakespeare, the "upstart crow" of Greene's attack, was beautifying an idea of Marlowe with his own imagination.

Holinshed does not mention the incidents of the crown and the mirror when describing the abdication of Richard. Froissart, whose Chronicle Shakespeare might have known, gives the most dramatic description of the abdication:

"On a day the Duke of Lancaster, accompanied with lords, dukes, prelates, earls, barons, and knights, and the notablest men of London, and of other good towns, rode to the tower, and there alighted. Then King Richard was brought into the hall, appparelled like a king in his robes of state, his sceptre in his hand, and his crown on his head: then he stood up alone, not holden nor stayed by no man, and said aloud: 'I have been King of England, Duke of Aquitaine, and Lord of Ireland, about twenty-two years, which signiory, royalty, sceptre, crown, and heritage I clearly resign here to my cousin, Henry of Lancaster; and I desire him here in this open presence, in entering of the same possession, to take this sceptre:' and so deliver'd it to the Duke, who took it."³

(1) W. D. Briggs, Marlowe's Edward II, London, 1914. P. 182.

(2) Ibid., p. 182-183.

(3) William G. Clark and William A. Wright, The Stage Edition of the Complete Works of Shakespeare, Volume XV, (n.d.).P.276.

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There are several differences between the two plays.

"Edward II was a tragedy of incident and situation in which Nemesis follows guilt and error."¹ Richard II was a tragedy of character. Edward does not struggle to prevent his murder; Richard does:

Edward. "I am too weak and feeble to resist-
Assist me, sweet God, and receive my soul.

Light. "Run for the table."

Edward. "O spare me, or dispatch me in a trice."

Light. "So, lay the table down, and stamp on it,
But not too hard, lest that you bruise his
body."

(King Edward is murdered.)²

Richard. "How now! What means death in this rude
assault?"

Villain, thy own hand yields thy death's
instrument."

(Snatching an axe from a Servant and
killing him.)

"Go thou, and fill another room in Hell."

(He kills another. Then Exton strikes
him down.)

"That hand shall burn in never quenching
fire

That staggers thus my person. Exton, thy
fierce hand

Hath with the king's blood stain'd the
king's own land.

Mount, mount, my soul! thy seat is up on
high;

Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward,
here to die."³

(Richard dies.)³

Craig says, "His character (Edward's) dooms him, prevents
him from struggling."⁴ He overlooks the fact that Edward had

(1) Hardin Craig, The Tudor Shakespeare: The Tragedy of
Richard II, New York, 1912. P. xiv.

(2) Edward II, V, v, 107 ff.

(3) Richard II, V, v, 105 ff.

(4) Craig, op. cit., p. xv.

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been "in a vault up to his knees in water",¹ and had not slept for ten days.

Schelling says that because Richard II was written in direct emulation of Edward II Shakespeare varied the catastrophe to make Richard precipitate his death "with a characteristic display of hasty temper."² For, Richard refused food from his keeper and beat him.

In Act III of Richard II Bolingbroke charged Bushy and Green of "breaking possession of the royal bed."³ Bakeless suggests that the King and Queen were in harmony except for this one reference. He says, "Perhaps Shakespeare was adhering too close to Marlowe."⁴

In the last act, Marlowe's stage is not heaped up with dead bodies as is Shakespeare's. Just as in Hamlet Shakespeare litters his stage with dead bodies after a bloody fight. Marlowe's last act certainly does not lack his characteristic horror; however, he needs no "deus ex machina to extricate his personages from their complicated difficulties."⁵ Shakespeare, in order to get the dead off the scene, has Exton and the other murderers lug away the corpses!

"This dead king to the living king I'll bear.
Take hence the rest, and give them burial here."⁶

(1) Edward II, V, v, 2.

(2) Schelling, op. cit., p. 107.

(3) Richard II, III, 1, 13.

(4) J. E. Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe: a Biographical and Critical Study, Harvard Ph.D Thesis, Cambridge, 1936. P. 894.

(5) Ingram, op. cit., p. 213.

(6) Richard II, V, v, 117, 118.

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Both Edward and Richard had what Bradley calls the "Tragic trait."¹ Edward's flaw was to be seen in his unnatural attraction for Piers Gaveston and his inability to cope with his underlings. Richard's was his inability to act like a king. Bradley says that Richard had a total incapacity for resisting the force which draws him even nearer to his downfall. He had "a fatal tendency to identify the whole thing with one interest, object, passion, or habit of mind."² Schelling says that the "Tragic element lies in the inherently unkingly nature of both the royal protagonists."³

The imagery, style, and structure of Richard II are typically Shakespearean. "The verse is typically Shakespearean, with abundant rime, which Marlowe practically never used in dramatic writing."⁴ The proportion of rime in Edward II was 1:23; in Richard II it was 1:4.⁵

The dominant imagery of Richard II follows that of the earlier historical plays, those written either in whole or in part by Shakespeare: I, II, III Henry VI, and Richard III. Spurgeon says, "The most constant running metaphor and picture is that of growth as seen in a garden and orchard, with the deterioration, decay, and destruction brought about by ignorance and carelessness on the part of the gardener, as shown by untended weeds, pests, lack of pruning and manuring, or

(1) A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy, London, 1922, P. 20.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Schelling, op. cit., p. 66.

(4) Bakeless, op. cit., p. 894.

(5) Ibid., p. 895.

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on the other hand by the rash and untimely cutting or lopping of fine trees."¹.

The structure of Edward II closely resembles that of Richard II. It calls to mind the wheel of fortune.² As Edward is falling on the wheel of fortune, Mortimer is being raised. As Richard, in Act III, "has run his course of rising action and has begun his descent," Bolingbroke comes "pressing up behind him upon the turning wheel, rising as he falls."³

Mortimer speaks of the wheel of fortune in his last speech:

"Base Fortune, now I see that in thy wheel
There is a point, to which when men aspire,
They tumble headlong down: that point I touched
And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
Why should I grieve at my declining fall?"⁴.

Richard speaks of his downward trip on the wheel of fortune in a simile of the two buckets:

"Now is this golden crown like a deep well
That owes two buckets, filling one another,
The emptier ever dancing in the air,
The other down, unseen and full of water:
That bucket down and full of tears am I,
Drinking my griefs, whilst you mount up on high."⁵.

The evidence seems to prove conclusively that Shakespeare used Marlowe's play as his model. The two playwrights had approached the subject of the fall of princes from the same point. Marlowe's king is more despicable than Shakespeare's, but as

(1) C. F. E. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery, New York, 1935. P. 216.

(2) Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy, Berkeley, California, 1936. P. 416.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Edward II, V, vi, 57-61

(5) Richard II, IV, i, 184-189.

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a powerful drama that sways the emotions through pity and fear. Edward II is equal to Richard II. Richard II seems to be better written than Marlowe's play in the use of word pictures and symbolism, but Edward II surpasses Shakespeare's play in that its structure leaves no dangling or unexplained ends.

When the dramatist from Stratford turned to the writing of his Chronicle Plays, he looked to the Chronicle Histories for his material. In writing Richard II Shakespeare turned to that well-worked quarry, that "omnibus volume,"¹ the second edition of Holinshed's Chronicle. There he found the facts of King Richard's reign, his rise and fall on the wheel of fortune; however, it is evident from the comparison of the play with the Chronicle of Holinshed in such a study as Boswell-Stone's Shakespeare's Holinshed that Shakespeare knew and used other histories. He had many chronicles to choose from in his time. There was Froissart's Chronicle translated into English from the French by Lord Berners. There was Peto Livio da Forli's Life Of Henry the Fifth as translated from the Italian in 1513 by an anonymous writer. There were Sir Thomas More, Edward Hall, Richard Grafton, Fabian, and John Stow--each with a chronicle to his credit. And the ones Shakespeare seems to have used in writing his Richard II are Froissart, Hall, and Grafton--that is in addition to Holinshed.

Holinshed's Chronicle goes back to the very early days of Britain and Scotland. It covers so much material that the sections on the individual kings are short. Froissart's Chronicle starts with the latter part of Edward II's reign and

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goes as far as the death of Richard the Second; Hall's history starts with Richard the Second and brings history down to Henry VIII. Both Froissart and Hall are very thoughtful, give more space to the individual reigns of kings; and where the former adds a personal touch by writing from actual experience, the latter puts in pages of the Tudor's propaganda. Froissart had lived in the courts of Edward III and Richard II. Hall wrote his volumes as a command performance for Henry VIII, strongest of the Tudors.

There has been much scholarly work done on the question of Shakespeare's knowledge. In many isolated spots Shakespeare brings in facts that may have come from distinct sources, or then again may have been a part of his general knowledge. If one were to write a biography of George Washington today, he might supply many facts from his general field of knowledge and not be able to quote sources for them. If Shakespeare were brought back to earth from the other side of the curtain, as was Helen of Troy in Doctor Faustus, to answer the questions of modern scholars, he would probably surprise the scholars with his answers and be surprised at their questions! An example of the above is shown in Wilson's note on the death of Gloucester, Thomas of Woodstock: Holinshed says that he was murdered by smothering; but here "Shakespeare was following Jean Le Beau's Chronique: 'Le roi envoya son oncle a Calais, et la fut decolle!'"¹.

(1) Kittredge, op. cit., p. 466.

goes as far as the death of Richard the Second; Hall's history starts with Richard the Second and brings history down to Henry VIII. Both Froissart and Hall are very thoughtful, give more space to the individual reigns of kings; and where the former adds a personal touch by writing from actual experience the latter puts in pages of the Tudor's propaganda. Froissart had lived in the courts of Edward III and Richard II. Hall wrote his volumes as a command performance for Henry VIII, strongest of the Tudors.

There has been much scholarly work done on the question of Shakespeare's knowledge. In many isolated spots Shakespeare brings in facts that may have come from distinct sources, or then again may have been a part of his general knowledge. If one were to write a biography of George Washington today, he might supply many facts from his general field of knowledge and not be able to quote sources for them. If Shakespeare were brought back to earth from the other side of the curtain, as was Helen of Troy in Dodder's Emetia, to answer the questions of modern scholars, he would probably surprise the scholars with his answers and be surprised at their questions! An example of the above is shown in Wilson's note on the death of Gloucester, Thomas of Woodstock; Holinshed says that he was murdered by smothering; but here "Shakespeare was following Jean Le Beau's Chronique: 'Le roi envoya son oncle a Calais, et la fut decollé!'"

1. Froissart¹.

Jean Froissart, a French historian and poet of the fourteenth century, was one of the recognized authorities for the reigns of Edward the Third and Richard the Second in Shakespeare's day.² A contemporary of both these kings, Froissart gives a first-hand account of the events and wars of the last three-quarters of the fourteenth century in his four-volume chronicle. Froissart's dates almost coincide with those of Chaucer: Froissart was born in 1338 and died in 1410; Chaucer was born in 1340 and died in 1400. In 1361 Froissart crossed the English Channel to visit London; here he presented Philippa, Edward the Third's Queen, with a poem concerning the recent war between England and France. Evidently the Queen liked his poem as she made him her secretary, a position from which Froissart picked up valuable information for his later chronicle. Traveling widely in her employ, in 1366 Froissart was with the Black Prince, Edward III's eldest son, on an expedition to France; and in 1368 he went to Italy with the Duke of Clarence, Edward's third son.³ For over forty years he worked on his chronicle, which, as translated by Lord Berners in the reign of Henry VIII, became a source for Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

(1) In order to make the following sections available to a reader immediately upon reference to the Table of Contents, I have given them sub-headings within the chapter.

(2) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 25.

(3) D. C. Gilman, H. T. Peck, and F. M. Colby, editors. The New International Encyclopedia, New York, 1903. Volume VII, p. 854.

J. Froissart

Jean Froissart, a French historian and poet of the fourteenth century, was one of the recognized authorities for the reigns of Edward the Third and Richard the Second in English history. His work, *Chronique*, gives a first-hand account of the events and wars of the last three-quarters of the fourteenth century in his four-volume chronicle. Froissart's dates almost coincide with those of Shakespeare. Froissart was born in 1333 and died in 1400; Shakespeare was born in 1564 and died in 1616. In 1351 Froissart crossed the English Channel to visit London; here he presented himself to Edward the Third's court, with a poem concerning the recent war between England and France. Evidently the Queen liked his poem as she made him her secretary, a position from which Froissart picked up valuable information for his later work. Traveling widely in her employ, in 1356 Froissart was with the Black Prince, Edward III's eldest son, on an expedition to France; and in 1358 he went to Italy with the Duke of Clarence. Edward's third son. For over forty years he worked on his chronicle, which, as translated by Lord Berners in the reign of Henry VIII, became a source for Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

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- (2) *Trifling, on, etc., p. 25.*
- (3) *J. C. Gilman, R. L. Bush, and F. W. Colby, editors. The New International Encyclopedia, New York, 1903. Volume VII, p. 854.*

The title page of the first edition of Froissart in English translation, as published by Pinson in 1525, reads:

"Here Begynnith the firste volum of Syr John Froissart: of the Cronycles of Englande, Fraunce, Spayne, Portyngale, Scotlande, Bretaine, Flaunders; and other places adioynge. Translated oute of the Frenche into oure naterall Englishe tongue by John Bouchier knyghte, lorde Berners."¹.

Medieval in tone, Froissart's Chronicles are concerned with mental springs of action, with the motives behind events. He says that Bolingbroke would have been faithful if "Richard had recalled him from exile and allowed him his title and lands at the death of John of Gaunt, his father."² Froissart does not have the philosophical and moralizing way of interpreting history that Hall had. That came in with the Tudors in their looking for cause and effect in trying to prove themselves rightful heirs to the throne.

The best evidence that Shakespeare used Froissart is given to us by Shakespeare himself! In Henry VI, Part One, he mentioned Froissart: (The French have just been repulsed by the English, and the French noble Alencon is speaking to the French King, Charles.)

"Froissart, a countryman of ours, records,
England all Olivers and Rowlands bred
During the time Edward the Third did reign.
More truly may this now be verified;
For none but Samsons and Goliases
It sendeth forth to skirmish. One to ten!
Lean raw-boned rascals! who would e'er suppose
They had such courage and audacity?"³.

(1) Froissart, Jean, Chronicles, as translated by Berners, London, 1525. P. 1.

(2) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 26.

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Kittredge suggests that the pretty story about "Roan Barbary" (Richard II, V, v, 76 ff.) came from Froissart's story about the king's greyhound.¹ In the play Richard, a prisoner in the Tower of London, is visited by a groom of the stable; the latter came to tell the king of Bolingbroke's proud trip through the streets of London:

Groom. "O, how it yearn'd my heart when I beheld
In London streets, that coronation-day,
When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary,
That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,
That horse that I so carefully have dress'd!"

K.Rich. "Rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,
How went he under him?"

Groom. "So proudly as if he distain'd the ground."²

The incident of the greyhound is to be found in Froissart in the section on King Richard II. According to this chronicle Richard had surrendered himself to Derby (Bolingbroke), and was being escorted from his palace to the Tower of London to avoid the wrath of the people of London. Froissart writes:

"I heard of a singular circumstance that happened, which I must mention. King Richard had a greyhound called Math, beautiful beyond measure, who would not notice nor follow anyone but the king. Whenever the king rode abroad, the greyhound was loosed by the person who had him in charge, and ran instantly to caress him, by placing his two fore feet on his shoulders. It fell out, that as the king and the duke of Lancastre were conversing in the court of the castle, their horses being ready for them to mount, the greyhound was untied, but, instead of running as usual to the king, he left him, and leaped to the duke of Lancastre's shoulders, paying him every court, and caressing him as he was formerly used to caress the king. The duke, not acquainted with this greyhound, asked the king the meaning of this fondness, saying "What does this mean?" "Cousin," replied the king, "it means a great deal for you, and very little for me." "How?" said the duke: "Pray explain it."

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(1) Kittredge, op. cit., p. 427.
(2) Richard II, V, v, 76 ff..

"I understand by it," answered the king, "that this greyhound fondles and pays court to you this day as King of England, which you will surely be, and I shall be deposed, for the natural instinct of the dog shows it to him. Keep him therefore by your side, for he will now leave me and follow you." The Duke of Lancaster treasured up what the king had said, and paid attention to the greyhound, who would never more follow Richard of Bordeaux, but kept by the side of the Duke of Lancaster, as was witnessed by thirty thousand men."¹.

Froissart's Chronicles do not go into the reign of Henry the Fourth, but stop at the death of King Richard, whose funeral is added to by the eyewitness account of the chronicler to some of Richard's past glory:

"More than twenty thousand persons, of both sexes, came to see the king, who lay in the litter, his head on a black cushion and his face uncovered. Some pitied him, when they saw him in this state, but others did not, saying he had for a long time deserved death. Now consider, ye kings, lords, dukes, prelates, and earls, how very changeable the fortunes of this world are. This king Richard reigned twenty-two years in great prosperity, and with much splendor; for there never was a king of England who expended such sums, by more than one hundred thousand florins, as King Richard did in keeping up his state and his household establishments. I, John Froissart, canon and treasurer of Chimay, know it well, for I witnessed and examined it, during my residence with him for a quarter of a year."².

Shakespeare did not picture the funeral of Richard as being any more than a coffin being carried on and off the stage, but he did mention the past glory of Richard's household:

" . . . Was this the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men?"³.

There is a similarity of words and ideas here that may have a relationship; however, the generally accepted source for this

(1) Jean Froissart, Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries, as translated by Thomas Johnes. London, 1868. P. 692, Vol. II.

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speech is Holinshed's Chronicle. Holinshed reads:

"He kept the greatest port, and maintained the most plentiful house, that euer any king in England did either before his time or since. For there resorted dailie to his court aboue ten thousand persons that had meat and drink there allowed them." 1.

The main story of Richard II may be found in all of the chronicles covering his reign. Froissart's four volumes cover the history of England from the latter part of the reign of Edward II to the death of Richard II, and, as a good part of his chronicling is concerned with events he lived through, heard about, or actually participated in, it is more reliable than later chronicles.

The chapters of Froissart's Chronicle follow in the same approximate order as the scenes from Richard II, as follows:

- "94. The earl marshall challenges the earl of Derby, son to the Duke of Lancaster, in the presence of the king and his council.
- 95. King Richard of England banishes the earl of Derby from England for ten years, and the earl marshall for his life.
- 96. The earl of Derby in consequence of his banishment, leaves England for France.
- 102. The answer the duke of Lancaster gives the knight who had been sent to him by the earl of Derby, to request permission to join the expedition against the Turks. The death of the Duke of Lancaster.
- 109. The earl of Derby sails from Brittany to England.
--His reception by the citizens of London.
- 110. The earl of Derby, now duke of Lancaster, undertakes the government of England, and, by the aid of the Londoners, determines to seize the throne.
- 111. King Richard is informed that the earl of Derby is marching against him with a powerful army.
--He retires to Flint Castle.

(1) W. G. Boswell-Stone, Shakespeare's Holinshed, New York, 1896. P. 119.

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112. King Richard surrenders himself to the earl of Derby to be conducted to London.

113. King Richard is confined in the Tower of London.

115. King Richard of England resigns his crown and kingdom into the hands of the Duke of Lancaster.

116. A Parliament meets at Westminster, when the Duke of Lancaster is publicly acknowledged king of England. --The great magnificence of his coronation.

119. The earls of Huntingdon and Salisbury, and some others, having failed to murder treacherously king Henry of Lancaster, rise in arms against him. --They are defeated and beheaded, and their heads sent to Henry.

121. The death of King Richard. --The truces are renewed and kept between France and England.-- The Earl Marshal, who had been banished England, dies at Venice."¹

In Froissart's version of the tournament (Chapter 95 above) there is a hint as to the development by Shakespeare of John of Gaunt. In Richard II Gaunt greets Bolingbroks after his banishment as follows:

"What is six winters? They are quickly gone.

Call it travel that thou tak'st for pleasure.

All the places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens."²

In Froissart's Chronicles a group of certain lords give their opinions on the banishment of Derby:

"The Earl of Derby may readily go two or three years and amuse himself in foreign parts, for he is young enough; and although he has already travelled to Prussia, the Holy Sepulchre, Cairo, and Saint Catherine's, he will find other places to visit."³

(1) Froissart, op. cit., p. xiii, xiv.

(2) Richard II, I, iii, 260 ff..

(3) Froissart, op. cit., p. 666.

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In each of these parallel incidents a lord, or lords, observes the punishment meted out to Bolingbroke by Richard, and, although inclined to Bolingbroke, agrees to the sentence, and tries to mitigate it with pleasant talk of travel.

Froissart does not give much space to the death of John of Gaunt. In Chapter 102 (see above) he tacks the information about Gaunt's death onto the story of Bolingbroke's request to his father for permission to make a trip to the Holy Land. Holinshed is very meager in his information concerning the demise of Gaunt. Boswell-Stone says, "the particulars of John of Gaunt's death were imagined by Shakespeare."¹

Dodson's suggestion that Holinshed's Gloucester might be a source for Gaunt is a good one.² Gaunt, in Richard II, is the same sort of a super-patriot as Gloucester is in Part Two Henry VI. John of Gaunt stood by the King even after his son had been exiled;³ Gloucester stood by his King even after his wife had been exiled.⁴ Each believed that God would be eventually on the side of the right no matter what happened. Gloucester's undeserved punishment was greater than Gaunt's; Gloucester's wife Eleanor, was an ambitious woman who tried to use the forces of evil--namely three conjurers and a witch--for her own selfish ends. The conjurers were hanged; the witch was ordered by King Henry to be burned; and Eleanor was banished to the

(1) Boswell-Stone, op. cit., p. 91

(2) Sarah Dodson, "Holinshed's Gloucester as a possible source for Gaunt in Shakespeare's Richard II," Texas University Studies in English, July, 1924. Volume XIV, p. 31-37.

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(4) II Henry VI, II, iii.

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Isle of Man, after being led through the streets in bare feet as a penance. The scales of justice seemed askew when Gloucester was asked to give up the protectorship and then killed by the scheming trio of Suffolk, York, and the Queen Margaret. In the same fashion Gaunt dies with the praise of England on his lips, and scarcely before his body is cold Richard breaks the feudal custom or law of inheritance and takes possession of Bolingbroke's inherited lands, customary rights, and income.

The Chronicle of Jean Froissart parallels Holinshed's later work for the most part. Common to both are the story of the tournament, King Richard's unsuccessful trip to Ireland, his return to find Bolingbroke in power, his confinement, his deposition, and eventual murder. There is one incident in the abdication scene which may have come from Froissart. The picture of Richard dramatically passing his crown to Henry Bolingbroke might have suggested the business of the crown to Shakespeare:

"King Richard next raised the crown with his two hands from his head, and placing it before him said, 'Henry, fair cousin, the duke of Lancaster, I present and give to you this crown, with which I was crowned King of England, and all the rights depended on it.'"¹

(The original edition of the Lord Berner's translation, as microfilmed from the manuscript in the British Museum was probably the very one Shakespeare was familiar with. It reads as follows:

"Than kynge Rycharde toke the crowne fro his heed with bothe his handes/ and set it before hym and sayd/ Fayre cousin Henry duke of Lancastre/ I gyve and delyver you this crowne/ wherwith I was crowned kyng of England/ and therwith all the right thereto dependyng.")²

(1) Froissart, op. cit., p. 698.

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(2) Froissart, Jean, Chronicles, as Translated by Lord Berners, London, 1525. P. ccx xlii.

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"In the humble house of Shakespeare's boyhood there was, in all probability, to be found a thick squat folio volume, then some thirty years printed, in which might be read, 'what misery, what murder, and what execrable plagues this famous region hath suffered by the division and dissension of the renowned houses of Lancaster and York.' This book was Hall's Chronicle."¹

Edward Hall was a graduate of King's College at Cambridge. He was a strong defender of the Tudors, and in his Chronicle showed "in all its completeness that new moralizing of history which came in with the waning of the Middle Ages, the weakening of the Church, and the rise of nationalism."² Hall was the first English chronicle-writer to put ideas of reform into his history. His book was first published in 1542, but came out in a larger edition--the one Shakespeare probably used--in 1548. The title page of the 1548 edition, as published by Richard Grafton, read as follows:

"The Union of the two noble and Illustre famelies of Lancastre and Yorke beeyng long in continual discension for the crowne of this noble realme, with all the actes done in bothe the tymes of the Princes, bothe of the one linage and of the other, beginnyng at the time of kyng Henry the fowerth, the first auctor of this devision and so successively procedyng down to the reigne of the high and prudent prince kyng Henry the eight, the undubitate flower and very heire of both the sayd linages. 1548. Introduction by Richard Grafton."³

(1) Clark and Wright, op. cit., p. 301.

(2) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 42.

(3) Edward Hall, The Union of the two noble and Illustrious famelies, etc., London, 1548. P. 1. (From Harvard University Library Microfilm of Manuscript from the British Museum.)

"In the humble house of Shakespeare's boyhood there was, in all probability, to be found a thick square folio volume, then some thirty years printed, in which might be read, 'what misery, what murder, and what execrable plagues this famous region hath suffered by the division and dissension of the renowned houses of Lancaster and York.' This book was Hall's Chronicle."

Edward Hall was a graduate of King's College at Cambridge. He was a strong defender of the Tudors, and in his Chronicle showed "in all its completeness that new moralizing of history which came in with the waning of the Middle Ages, the weakening of the Church, and the rise of nationalism."² Hall was the first English chronicle-writer to put ideas of reform into his history. His book was first published in 1542, but came out in a larger edition--the one Shakespeare probably used--in 1548. The title page of the 1548 edition, as published by Richard Grafton, read as follows:

"The Union of the two noble and illustre families of Lancaster and York being long in continual dissension for the crowne of this noble realme, with all the actes done in both the tymes of the Princes, both of the one linage and of the other, beginning at the time of King Henry the fourth, the first anchor of this dissension and so successively proceeding down to the reigns of the high and prudent prince King Henry the sixth, the undubitate flower and very helme of both the sayd linages. 1548. Introduction by Richard Grafton."

(1) Clark and Wright, op. cit., p. 301.
(2) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 42.
(3) Edward Hall, The Union of the two noble and illustrious families, etc., London, 1548, p. 1. (From Harvard University Library Microfilm of Manuscript from the British Museum.)

It was the custom in those early days, when there was no copyright law to worry about, for one chronicler to borrow (or steal, or plagiarize) from another, using great sections of another's work. Grafton, Stow, and Holinshed took much of their chronicles bodily from Hall. Hall in turn had taken much of his material from earlier chroniclers, but he had added to them a Renaissance spirit, unchained by the Church or the customs of the past. He put into dramatic shape "the spirit stirring recitals of the old chronicle writers; in whose narratives, and especially in that portion of them in which they make their characters speak, there is a manly straightforward earnestness which in itself not seldom becomes poetical."¹.

In professional life Hall was a lawyer, a judge, and a member of Parliament. In his chronicles he is shown to have been an uncompromising Protestant; so much so that in the reign of Queen Mary, the Catholic Queen following Henry VIII, his books were burnt. Hall's Chronicle took up history where Froissart left off: starting with the reign of Henry IV, it goes through the reign of Henry VIII, with the section on the latter occupying almost half of it.

Hall started with a background of the War of Roses: the causes of the dispute which caused so much misery to Englishmen. Tillyard says, "Hall begins actual history precisely where Shakespeare was to begin it when he wrote his major historical tetralogy, the quarrel of Bolingbroke and Mowbray and

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the estrangement of Bolingbroke from his cousin Richard II."¹. To Hall this episode was the beginning of all the trouble that led through one battle after another and one king after another right on down to Bosworth Field.

In using Hall as a source Shakespeare had a complete historical and moralizing account of the War of Roses. We must remember that Holinshed was shorter in his individual sections: he had to be as he covered so much material. However, Hall was covering the reigns of just a few kings, not the entire legendary and factual history of the English royalty. Even Boswell-Stone, who sees most of Richard II as a parallel to Holinshed's Chronicle, attributes passages to Hall for which there was no like passage in Holinshed.²

From evidence available it seems that Shakespeare utilized Hall as well as Holinshed. Zeeveld says, "There is also evidence to show that Shakespeare gave dramatic expression to the very qualities in Hall's history which later historians rejected or ignored: the elevation of style by means of oration and rhetorical figure, liveliness of narrative detail, development of character and motive, and the domination of theme in the embellishment of continuity in fifteenth century history."³.

(1) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 45.

(2) W. Gordon Zeeveld, Edward Hall, A Study of Sixteenth Century Historiography in England, Baltimore, 1937. P. 317.

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(3) Ibid., p. 322.

The following evidence has been submitted by W. Gordon Zeeveld to prove that "in many cases Shakespeare turned to Hall rather than Holinshed":¹.

Shakespeare speaks of Bolingbroke's horses in the scene where Northumberland encounters King Richard before Flint Castle as:

"His barbed steeds."
(Richard II, III, iii, 117).

Holinshed in describing Bolingbroke's horse says it was "barded with greene and blew velvet." (Holinshed 2. 847). Hall is more like Shakespeare in saying that the horse was "barbed with blew and grene velvet." (Hall 1. 5).

The following passages occur in Shakespeare and in Hall, but not in Holinshed. Shakespeare's lines are:

"Then call them to our presence: face to face,
And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear
The accused freely speak." (Richard II, I, i, 15-17)

Hall says that Richard "called to hym the duke of Lancastre and his consaill, and also the dukes of Herfforde and Norffolk, and caused the accuser to report openly the wordes to him declared." (Hall 1. 3)

Shakespeare lists the followers of Bolingbroke:

"The Lord Northumberland, his son young Henry Percy,
The Lords of Ross, Beaumont, and Willoughby."
(Richard II, II, ii, 53-54)

Holinshed's order is different as he lists "the lords of Lincolnshire, and other countries adjoining, as the Lords Willough-

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(1) Reveries, pp. 319 ff..

by, Ros, Darcie, and Beaumont." (Holinshed 2. 853). Hall is similar to Shakespeare in his enumeration of the rebels, "the erles of Northumbrelande and Westmerlande, the lordes Percy, Rose, and Willoughby." (Hall 1. 8)

Zeeveld draws one parallel which, I believe, may be discounted.¹ Shakespeare uses the line:

"A God on earth thou art."

(Richard II, V, iii, 136).

The parallel passage quoted is: "Here a man may evidently perceyve the olde Greke prouerbe to bee very trew, which is that a man, to a man, shall sometyme be as a God." (Hall 1.324). Shakespeare was having the Duchess of York praise Bolingbroke after Bolingbroke listened to her plea and gave her son, Aumerle, his life. Hall is discussing John Chenlet's rescue of the Earle of Richmond. The passages are so far afield that it is a doubtful parallel.

The image of the storm being compared to Richard's state of affairs in Shakespeare's play of Richard II has no likeness in Holinshed, but has a possible parallel in Hall. Northumberland says:

"But, Lords, we hear this fearful tempest sing,
Yet seek no shelter to avoid the storm."

(Richard II, II, i, 264-5.)

in Hall, Edmund, the Duke of York, prays daily for Richard "to deuerte from kyng Richarde the darke cloude whiche he sawe dependyng over his hed." (Hall 1. 6).

(1) Zeeveld, op. cit., p. 319.

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E. K. Chambers says, "The main source of Richard II was the Chronicle of Holinshed, in the second edition of 1587."¹

As the best handbook for the factual side of the history of Richard the Second's reign, Holinshed cannot be ignored. For a dramatist who did not have time to wade through the philosophy of Hall, Holinshed was a good workshop. Tillyard says, "Holinshed seizes on the factual side of Hall and ignores his philosophy."²

There were many chronicles published right after the accession of Elizabeth. The national consciousness which had reawakened under Henry VII, waxed strong in the reign of Henry VIII, and came to full flower in the age of Elizabeth. With this national consciousness was a new interest in history.³ The most popular of the historians was Holinshed, and he was also the most important chronicler of the Sixteenth Century: Tillyard says, "The publication of a second edition of Holinshed's Chronicle in 1587 did more to forward the growth of the English Chronicle Play than the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588!"⁴

In 1562 the third edition of Fabyan's Chronicle went to press. In the same year Grafton brought out An Abridgement of the English Chronicles. John Stowe's A Summary of English Chronicles was published in 1565. This chronicle ran through ten

(1) E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, Oxford, 1930. P. 356.

(2) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 99.

(3) Schelling, op. cit., p. 33.

(4) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 101.

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Holinshed's chronicle doesn't cover the whole history of the world starting with Adam, but it does the next best thing: it starts with an account of Noah and the Flood. It then goes down to the legendary history of England and finally to the events of his own day. "He was a compiler, whose crime was to miss the point of the more distinguished of his sources," says Tillyard.⁵ "He neither rewrites entirely nor has the tact to discern and anthologise the essentials. He blurs the great Tudor myth....On the other hand Holinshed was extremely useful to his contemporaries. His style is simple, and his sense at once

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Holinshed, who wrote what has been called the worst chapter of the Mirror for Magistrates, lacked the creative and imaginative ability of Froissart and Hall. Shakespeare used his so-called "omnibus volume" to get the facts he needed, but he did not fail to see the over-all picture and basic importance of the fall of princes. Farnham says of the following passage, in comparing it to Shakespeare's interpretation of the rise of Bolingbroke and the fall of Richard on the wheel of fortune, that "Shakespeare allows us to wonder less at the secret ways of fate."² Holinshed says:

"This surelie is a verie norable example, and not unworthie of all princes to be well weied, and diligentlie marked, that this Henry duke of Lancastre should be called to a kingdome, and have the helpe and assistance (almost) of all the whole realme, which perchaunce never thereof thought or yet dreamed, and that King Richard should thus be left desolate, void, and in despaire of all hope and comfort, in whom if there were anie offense, it aught rather to be imputed to the frailtie of wanton youth, than to the malice of his heart. In this dejecting of the one and advancing of other, the providence of God is to be respected, and his secret will to be wondered at."³.

This manner of viewing history lacks the search for cause and effect shown by a philosopher such as Hall. Holinshed was a good compiler of facts. That is what Shakespeare used him for--to get a basic outline for his play; but Holinshed was by no means the only chronicle Shakespeare used as Alden suggests.⁴.

(1) Tillyard, op. cit., p. 51.

(2) Farnham, op. cit., p. 416.

(3) Raphael Holinshed, Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland, London, 1587. Vol. II, p. 855.

(4) Raymond M. Alden, A Shakespeare Handbook, New York, 1935. P. 120.

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 (3) Raphael Hollinshed, Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland, London, 1587, Vol. II, p. 655.
 (4) Raymond M. Alden, A Shakespeare Handbook, New York, 1935, p. 120.

Boswell-Stone in his book Shakespeare's Holinshed compares Richard II with the chronicle, and he seems to have covered all of the significant material relating to the play. The following passages from Richard II show its relationship to the selections from the chronicle of Boswell-Stone:

At a formal meeting of the court Bolingbroke challenges Mowbray; Shakespeare said:

"Now, Thomas Mowbray, do I turn to thee,
And mark my greeting well; for what I speak
My body shall make good upon this earth
Or my divine soul answer it in heaven.
Thou art a traitor and a miscreant,
Too good to be so, and too bad to live."¹.

Holinshed said:

"Henry, duke of Hereford, accused Thomas Mowbraie, duke of Norfolke, of certaine words which he should utter in had betwixt them, as they rode togither latelie before betwixt London and Brainford; sounding highlie to the kings dishonor. And for further prooffe thereof, he presented a supplication to the king, wherein he appealed to the duke of Norfolke in the field of battell, for a traitor, false and disloiall to the king, and enemie vnto the realm."².

In the play at the lists at Coventry the Lord Marshal says:

"Harry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby,
Receive thy lance, and God defend the right!"³.

In the chronicle Mowbray, the Duke of Norfolk said:

"God aid him that hath the right."⁴.

As the two combatants approach the hour of doom, we see practically the same action in Holinshed as in Shakespeare. The

(1) Richard II, I, 1, 35 ff..

(2) W. G. Boswell-Stone, Shakespeare's Holinshed, New York, 1896. P. 78.

(3) Richard II, I, 111, 100.

(4) Boswell-Stone, op. cit., p. 88.

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latter writes:

Mar. "Sound trumpets, and set forward combatants.

A charge sounded.

Stay! The King hath thrown his warder down.

King. "Let them lay by their helmets and their spears

And both return back to their chairs again."¹.

Holinshed's account of it is: (Holinshed III, p. 494).

"The Duke of Hereford was quicklie horssed, and closed his bauer, and cast his speare into the rest, and when the trumpet sounded set forward couragiously towards his enemy six or seven paces. The Duke of Norffolke was not fully forward, when the king cast downe his warder, and the heralds cried, 'Ho! ho!' Then the king caused their speares to be taken from them, and commanded them to repaire again to their chaires."².

The exact wording of the passage where King Richard lets us know that Bolingbroke is beloved of the common people is not in Holinshed. Shakespeare's lines were:

"Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here, and Green
Observ'd his courtship to the common people;
How he did seem to dive into their hearts
With humble and familiar courtesy;
What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
 wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles."³.

Boswell-Stone suggests the following passage as a possible source: (Holinshed III, 495).

"A wonder it was to see what number of people ran after him in every towne and street where he came, before he tooke the sea; lamenting and bewailing his departure, as who would saie that when he departed, the onelie shield, defense, and comfort of the commonwealth was vaded and gone."⁴.

Holinshed gave Shakespeare adequate material for the delineation of York. As Brandes says, "York was self-contradictory,

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unprincipled, vacillating, composite, and incoherent."¹ York upbraided the king for his faults, accepted office of highest confidence, betrayed his trust, overwhelmed Bolingbroke with his reproaches, admired the king's greatness in his fall, himself hastened the deposition, and rushed to the new king in indignation over his own son's plot and clamored for the blood of his own son Aumerle.²

In Richard II York argues for Bolingbroke's inheritance:

"Seek you to seize and gripe into your hands
The royalties and rights of banish'd Hereford?
Is not Gaunt dead? and doth not Hereford live?
Was not Gaunt just? and is not Harry true?
Did not the one deserve to have an heir?"³.

Holinshed pictures York as being sorely moved by the lack of respect shown for inherited rights by Richard: (Hol. III, 496)

"This hard dealing was much misliked of all the nobilitie, and cried out against of the meaner sort; but namelie the Duke of Yorke was therewith sore moved; who, before this time, had borne things with so patient a mind as he could."⁴.

Shakespeare has the material for York's appointment as ruler in Richard's absence: (Hol. III, 497).

"When these iusts were finished, the king departed toward Bristow, from thence to passe into Ireland; leauing the queene with hir traine still at Windesor: he appointed for his lieutenant generall in his absence his uncle the duke of Yorke."⁵.

When Bolingbroke returned to England, Richard was still in Ireland. His landing at Ravenspurgh is described by Shakespeare in Act Three, Scene Three. Previous to this Northumberland tells

- (1) George M. Brandes, William Shakespeare, New York, 1927. P. 144
- (2) Ibid..
- (3) Richard II, II, 1, 89-93.
- (4) Boswell-Stone, op. cit., p. 91
- (5) Ibid., p. 93.

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of respect shown for inherited rights by Richard: (Hol. III, 496)

"Did not the one deserve to have an heir?"
 Was not Gaunt just? and is not Harry true?
 Is not Gaunt dead? and doth not Hereford live?
 The royalties and rights of banish'd Hereford?
 "Seek you to seize and ripe into your hands

In Richard II York argues for Bolingbroke's inheritance:

his own sonumeris.5.

dignation over his own son's plot and clamored for the blood of self hastened the deposition, and rushed to the new king in in- his reproaches, admired the king's greatness in his fall, him- confidence, betrayed his trust, overwhelmed Bolingbroke with upbraid the king for his faults, accepted office of highest unprincipled, vacillating, composite, and incoherent."1. York

the news of Bolingbroke's departure and his intent to join him in Ravenspurgh:

"All these well furnish'd by the Duke of Britain
With eight tall ships, three thousand men of war,
Are making hither with all due expedience
And shortly mean to touch upon our northern shore.
Perhaps they had ere this, but that they stay
The first departing of the King for Ireland.

Away with me in post to Ravenspurgh."¹

Holinshed, in discussing the same landing party conducted by Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster, says:

"He had eight ships well furnished for the warre."²

He goes on with:

"The duke of Lancaster, after that he had coasted amongst the shore a certaine time, & had got some intelligence how the peoples minds were affected towards him, landed about the beginning of Iulie in Yorkshire, at a place sometimes called Rauenspur, betwixt Hull and Bridlington."³

And so it goes. The verbal passages that are parallel in the play and in Holinshed's Chronicle are two numerous to attempt a complete coverage here. However, from the above examples one may see that the critics, on the whole, are correct in saying that Shakespeare used Holinshed to get his facts.

Little is known about Raphael Holinshed. His life story is as obscure as the facts of the Bacon-Shakespeare question. From his will we know that he described himself as "Raphael Hollynshed of Bromecote in the County of Warrwick." He bequeathed all his property to "Thomas Burdett of Bromecote aforesaid Esq."

(1) Richard II, I, ii, 285 ff.. (Kittredge, op. cit., p. 481, says that Ravenspurgh was once "an important port on the Humber, long ago swept away by the sea.")

(2) Boswell-Stone, op. cit., p. 96.

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The will was made on October 1, 1578.¹

Thus we see a man who had little or no interest in the fall of princes as a part of a political doctrine, who wrote a very popular chronicle, and who had a great influence on Shakespeare. Holinshed, taking much of his chronicle in extenso from Hall, omitted the philosophizing on that "poisonous serpent, Domestic Dissension,"² emphasized by Hall. To Hall, writing as he was under the rule of Henry VIII, "the fifteenth century in England was the story of the consequence of the usurpation of Henry Bolingbroke, a theme whose course he traces down to the downfall of Richard III at Bosworth field and the marriage of Henry VII to Elizabeth."³ Hall had an over-all plan. Holinshed did not. Shakespeare followed Hall in this respect. Shakespeare saw history as Hall did with a unity and continuity such as was emphasized by all of the Tudors.

In places where Hall and Holinshed are parallel it is hard to tell which chronicle Shakespeare was using for his material. It does not matter. Any comparisons of these passages are as tedious as they are futile, for we do know that Shakespeare had access to both histories and in some cases might have used which ever account of an incident that pleased his fancy.

(1) Boswell-Stone, op. cit., p. ix.
 (2) Zeeveld, op. cit., p. 2.
 (3) Ibid., p. 1.

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Conclusions

The early English Chronicle Play had come a long way in its development before Shakespeare started his Richard II. With the coming of the Renaissance in England there had been a laicization of the religious drama, which had given birth to a new, national, popular type of play. An example of the transitional period is Bishop Bale's King Johan; whereas the examples of the new nationalistic chronicle play start with the legendary Gorboduc, go up to The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, and reach a grand climax in Marlowe's Edward II and Richard II of Shakespeare. The chronicle play moved in several directions as it evolved in the direction of the tragical-historical play Edward II. It stepped out of its Middle Age swaddling clothes as a morality-historical play: Bale's King Johan. It then went to the legendary-historical drama of Sackville and Norton: Gorboduc. It had academic success in Legge's Latinized-historical-tragical drama of Richard Tertius. The Chronicle Play then introduced the realm of Elizabeth to the subject of Richard the Second in the historical interlude The Life and Death of Jack Strawe, and in the De Casibus-historical-tragical Thomas of Woodstock. There was, of course, the pseudo-historical-tragical-comical play by Robert Greene on The Scottish History of James IV before the Chronicle Play stepped out in style in the mighty tragical-historical play of Marlowe, Edward II; and there was the purely non-tragical patriotic-historical play The Famous Victories of

Henry the Fifth.

The reasons for this climb to popularity on the part of the Chronicle Play were ultimately connected with the politics of the realm of Elizabeth. To be sure, the people had had an interest in the subject of the fall of princes for generations. They had either sung about the fall from grandeur to obscurity of famous personages in their ballads, or they had read about them in such works as Chaucer's Monk's Tale and its progeny; the Fall of Princes by Lydgate, and the Mirror for Magistrates by an assemblage of authors. However, this example set by fallen princes took on a new light when a virgin queen with no successor came to England's throne. Chaos had been a commonplace in the well-remembered years of the Wars of the Roses. The Englishman did not wish to be drafted to fight another war for a prince, a duke, or an earl who wished to use them as his tool, wound, kill, or maim them and then cast them aside. To put away a bad king^{as} in the case of Richard the Second was a little too much for the modern Sixteenth Century citizen of London to desire. If Elizabeth was a poor ruler, the people would stick by her. Yet they were interested enough in their own future to bring to popularity on the stage the most famous example of the tragical fall of a prince--that of Richard Plantagenet, grandson of Edward the Third, son of the Black Prince, and rightful heir to the throne.

The unhappy escapade of the Earl of Essex is sufficient evidence that the people of London wanted no fall for Elizabeth,

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The tragedy ascribed to the Earl of Essex is sufficient
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nor did they want another helping of Bolingbroke.

Therefore, as Shakespeare took his pen in his hand to write his Richard II, he had a background to draw from and a popularity guaranteed for any kind of historical play he might write. In order to make sure that his play would be a success, Shakespeare took the best of all the Chronicle Plays to date, Marlowe's Edward II, to emulate. He had had his start under Marlowe's guidance and collaboration in his first tetralogy of Henry VI, Parts One, Two, and Three, and Richard III. Now he was to step off on his own with the first play for his second tetralogy: Richard II. In Richard III Shakespeare had pictured a bad king who certainly did not look like a king. Richard "Crookback" had said of himself:

"But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass," 1.

Now in Richard II he was to picture a bad king who looked like a king, and in this play the looking-glass is brought onto the stage for the king to look at his countenance. In the "Mirror Scene"² Richard sends for a looking-glass. As he looks into it he knows that he looks like a king and so does his antagonist Bolingbroke. As Richard appears to surrender on the ramparts of Flint Castle Bolingbroke says,

"See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,
As doth the blushing discontented sun
From out the fiery portal of the east,
When he perceives the envious clouds are bent
To dim his glory and to stain the track
Of his bright passage to the occident."

(1) Richard III, I, i, 15, 16.

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White Castle Bolingbroke says,

"See, see, King Richard, look himself appear,
As he has the blushing discontented sun
From out the fiery portal of the east,
When he perceives the envious clouds are sent
To dim his glory and to stain the track
Of his blood-polluted face to the occident."

- (1) Richard II, I, I, 14.
(2) Richard II, IV, I, 257-258.

To this the unstable York replies:

"Yet looks he like a king: behold his eye,
As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth
Controlling majesty: alack, alack, for woe,
That any harm should stain so fair a show!" 1.

It is possible that Shakespeare anticipated this passage, and the passage of the Mirror Scene as he was working on Richard III.

Shakespeare wrote with all the information about Richard that was available to him at hand. There is no doubt that he, as a friend of the nobility, had deep interests in the political situation in England. Reese goes so far as to declare that instead of the succession problem throwing new light on Shakespeare, "Shakespeare's Chronicle Plays that fall between 1590 and 1600 throw additional light upon the succession problem." 2.

That Shakespeare knew Froissart, Hall, and Holinshed is a certainty. Just how many of the other chroniclers or historical poets he knew is not so certain. I have omitted from my discussion of the chronicle poems Daniel's Civil Wars between Lancaster and York (1595). Some critics--Alden,--Craig, and others think that Daniel's poem was a source for Shakespeare's introduction of Queen Isabel. However, I am inclined to agree with E.K. Chambers who said that "the treatment (of the material) is so different as to make an influence either way unlikely." 3. 4. 5.

- (1) Richard II, III, iii, 62 ff... deposition of Richard the
(2) Reese, op. cit., p. 77.
(3) Alden, op. cit., p. 120. the War of Roses. Right or wrong
(4) Craig, op. cit., p. 313.
(5) Chambers, op. cit., p. 356. Elizabeth. They had a surplus

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The Renaissance in England brought with it a revival of interest in the drama. The old types of English plays, the sacred drama, folk-plays, and morality plays gave way to a new, secular, patriotic drama. The missing-link in this evolution was that "Chronicle Everyman", Bishop Bale's King Johan.

After Elizabeth came to the throne the historical plays sprouted in two definite directions: that of the legendary play, of which Gorboduc is a notable example; and that of the factual history play such as The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth.

The subject of the fall of princes had interested writers for generations: Boccaccio wrote of them in his De Casibus; Chaucer pictures them in his Monk's Tale; Lydgate goes into sadistic ecstasies over them in his Fall of Princes; and the assorted authors of The Mirror for Magistrates attempted to point a moral by their account of them.

Shakespeare had many predecessors in the writing of Chronicle Plays, but aside from the form they gave him to use as his medium of expression, he owes them little. Shakespeare was living in a world where conformance to a basic plan of creation meant order and peace; non-conformance to the plan meant chaos and war. The English remembered the disorder and death of the War of Roses. They looked upon the deposition of Richard the Second as the main reason for the War of Roses. Right or wrong they were going to stick by Elizabeth. They had a surplus of the spirit of worship after the reformation had removed the

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shackles of the Holy Roman Church. That surplus energy was put toward the worship of the ruler, the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth of England. The latter had reasons to keep her guard up in the protection of the crown; in her younger years she was hounded by suitors at home and abroad, and at the end of her reign Essex attempted a revolt in true Bolingbroke style.

The critics agree that Shakespeare imitated Marlowe's Edward II in writing Richard II. In Shakespeare's day imitation was not usually thought of as plagiarism. The comparison of the facts of the reigns of Edward the Second and Richard the Second reveals an historical parallel; and the examination of the two plays shows similarities in the dramatis personae, in the story, and in short verbal parallels. The abdication is the clearest bit of lifting on the part of Shakespeare from Marlowe's play.

Shakespeare knew more than Holinshed's Chronicle, although that "omnibus-volume" covered the basic facts used by the poet in writing Richard II. Froissart, who had lived at the courts of Edward III and Richard II, gives an eyewitness account of much of Richard's life. Short passages indicate that either Shakespeare knew the stories from Froissart as a part of his general background of knowledge or that he had a copy of Lord Berners's translation before him as he wrote. Hall is often overlooked and overshadowed by the over-rated Holinshed; however, there are passages found in Richard II for which there is no parallel in Holinshed, but for which Hall supplies the words.

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